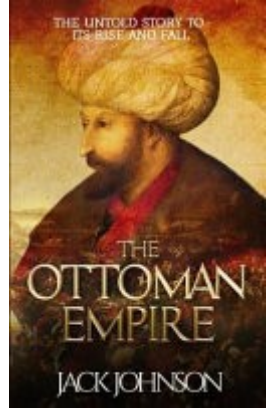
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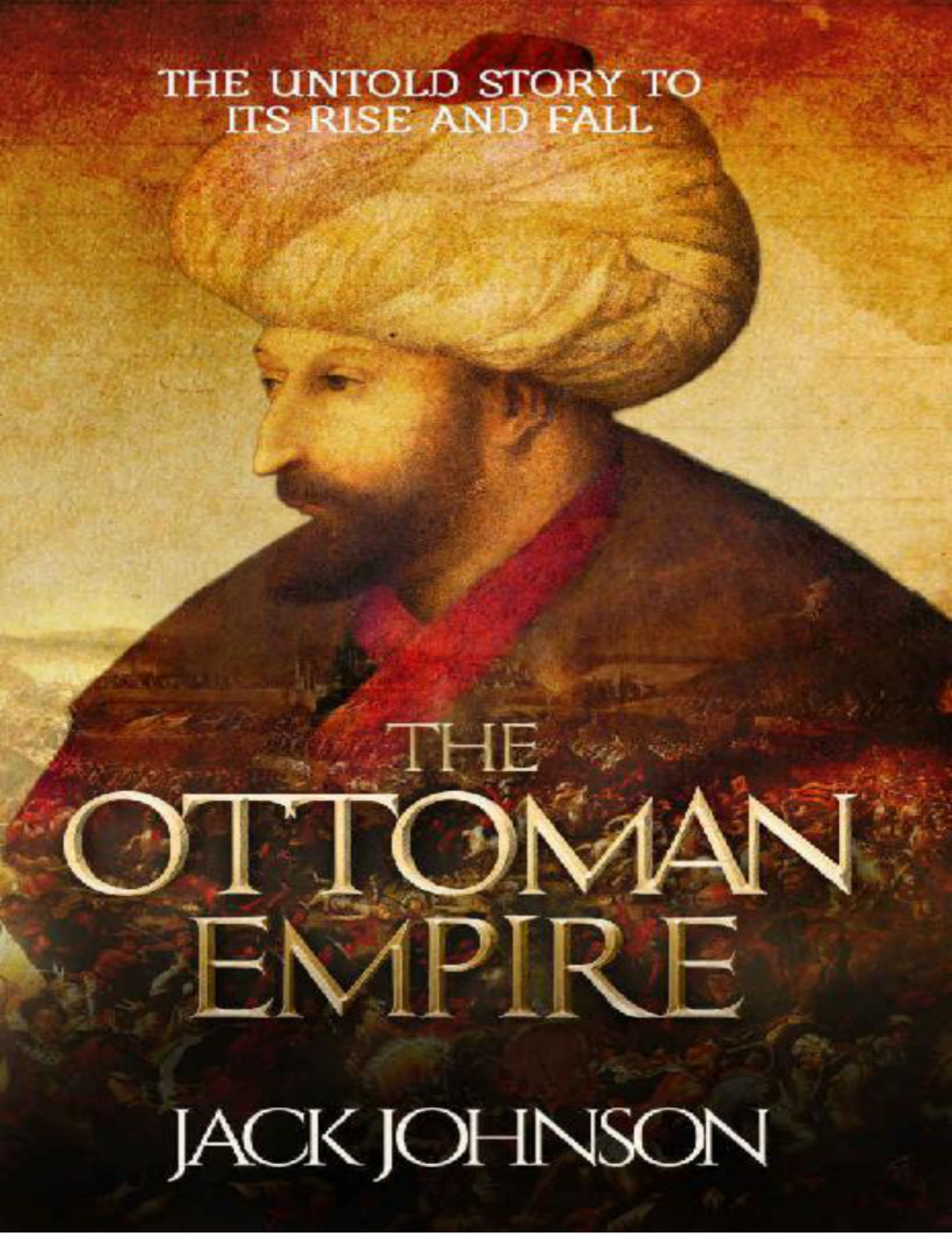
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The Ottoman Empire: The Untold Story to Its Rise and Fall

By Jack Johnson

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Introduction

The Ottoman Empire officially began in 1299 and grew to be one of the longest-lasting empires this world has seen. This empire was a monarchy, ruled by sultans who all descended from Osman I. Holding the largest concentration of Muslims, the rulers did not force non-Muslims to convert, something new for this time period.

The Ottoman territory started in an area that was known as Anatolia and grew to encompass territory in Europe, Africa, and Asia. The empire consisted of Arabs, Kurds, Persians, Armenians, and other minority groups. The groups were allowed to live in relative peace as long as they did not oppose the sultan's actions. During their Golden Age, the Ottoman Empire was quite powerful and culturally advanced.

Later on, the empire lost power for three main reasons. First of all, the military was unprepared and unable to protect the extensive land that was under Ottoman rule. The army was traveling by foot and could not reach borders very quickly. Secondly, the sultans were less capable of leading. After the first few sultans, it became less common for the sultans to go out on the battlefield and lead their army. The sultans instead turned their attention to the harem women and the empire's treasury. Because the title of sultan was inherited by blood not by capability, the sultans who were chosen were not always the best for the empire's welfare. Last of all, those within the empire began rebelling, including the Janissaries.

After nearly seven hundred years as a ruling authority, the Ottoman Empire became a democracy and was abolished in favor of the Republic of Turkey in 1922. While the Ottoman Empire contained

much more territory than that of modern day Turkey, the terms "Turkey" and "Ottoman Empire" are often used interchangeably. While the Ottoman Empire is not a power any longer, the empire did leave the world with some architectural and literary advancements. For example, the Hagia Sophia, a very famous mosque, was built by the Ottomans. They are a people who will be remembered for their accomplishments even though they no longer exist as an empire.

In chapter one, the origins of the Ottoman Empire will be explained. How did the empire begin? Where did it start? Next, chapter two will describe the lives of the first seven sultans who were integral in shaping the Ottoman Empire and helping it gain territory to expand.

Chapter three describes the daily life in the Ottoman Empire. What did the people do in their free time? How did they interact with other people groups? Were they an advanced culture or were they backward in their ways? What was the main religion of the country? How did the government interact with the people? These questions will all be answered in chapter three.

Next, chapter four describes the three emperors in charge during the time of the Ottoman Golden Age. What actions did those emperors take that made the Ottoman Empire so successful during that time?

Chapter five paints a picture of the Ottoman Empire as it declined and headed toward a collapse. Could it have been prevented? What mistakes did the sultans make?

Chapter six gives a short snapshot on the Tanzimat reforms that briefly gave the empire hope for a return to the glory days. Last of all,

chapter seven describes the final collapse and dissolution of the empire. The last few sultans are described along with how the empire became a republic.

Chapter 1: Origins of the Ottomans

While the Ottoman Empire was not officially recognized until the 13th century, the Ottoman Empire actually sprang from various people groups that existed long before. What do we know of these people groups before they had their own land?

Early Records

The earliest records indicate the Turks' presence around 2000 BC. They were around before, but the first written record sets them in this time period. The Turkish tribes are referred to by a term similar to our word for Hun, and the group is noted to be nomads. They wandered from place to place, moving as the game moved, and having no real home. This group wandered the area between Altai Mountains and the northern edge of the Gobi Desert(Sansal).

Some Turks in this area founded the Gokturk Empire. This empire was "the first to employ the word "Turk" in their official state name" ("Military"). The empire had leaders called Khan(male) or Khatun(female). The Khan was in charge or delegations between people groups and with other nations. These leaders were seen as the divine leader, and their ideas and desires were not questioned. They were treated as little gods.

During this empire's time, in the 6th century AD, the Turks moved to Orkhon Valley in Central Mongolia. The founder of the Gokturk Empire is a mystery. His name is Bumin Khan, but little else is known about him.

The first written records of the Turks' own writing are found in various regions of central Asia. The stone tablets describe both political and social aspects of the Turks during the 8th century AD. This 8th century AD is precisely when the Gokturk Empire was ruling, which is how we can begin to know about the Turkish history.

The Gokturk Empire collapsed, causing some groups to split off and migrate to other parts of the world. However, a majority of the Turks who had been part of the Gokturk Empire stayed together, allowing for the next step in their lives, which was a step of success.

During this time of severance among the Turks, Islam was spreading, and the Turks came into contact with the religion. The group of Turks left behind embraced Islam and began to create armies, striving for leadership positions and honor. For most of the ninth century, the Turks ruled an area called Baghdad until the Seljuks began rising in power.

An important moment in world history came in the year 1072 when the Seljuks beat the Byzantines which allowed the Turks to infiltrate the Anatolia area (Ahmed). As the Turks pressed into Anatolia, the Byzantines fought back and called to the Mongols for help. The Mongols ruled remotely by using satraps; however, the Turks were not going to allow the Mongols to retain any power.

The Mongols were trying to capture and defeat as many nations as possible. The Mongols were cruel toward their conquered cities. One example is when the Mongols conquered Baghdad, "slaughtering hundreds of thousands of civilians and burning down the Grand Library of Baghdad. The victors rolled the caliph inside a rug and trampled him to death with their horses" (Szczepanski). The Mongols

were a cruel people group, and the Turks were determined to fight against that cruelty.

An important battle in 1261, the Battle of Ayn Jalut, was a turning point in who held the power. The Mamluks, a group of slaves who fought on behalf of the Turks, used their advantage of faster horses and knowledge of the terrain to to beat back the Mongols. The victory in this war helped the Turks settle their power over the area while the Mongols lost power.

The Islamic beliefs of the Turks played a large role in their success. Before Islam was introduced to them, they were simply peaceful nomads, wandering with no goal. However, the Islamic faith helped unite the Turks and give them a common goal to conquer other civilizations. Values such as strength, humility, and charity were valued among the group of nomads. These battles and struggles to push forward and come into their own land was what lead to the rise of the Ottoman Empire which will be discussed in chapter two.

Anatolia

The word Anatolia comes from the Greek language and means "east" or "sunrise." ("Anatolia," Wikipedia). What do you think when you see a sunrise? Many think of a beginning or of new hope. While the Turks did not name the land, it has that same meaning for them and was the land that gave them the beginning of their new empire.

Anatolia was the kingdom where the Turks experienced their first real success in taking over. It was also the base for all their other future attempts at expansion. Anatolia was their first win, and that win gave them hope for future wins.

Anatolia is the peninsula between the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Aegean Sea. The Bosphorus Strait connects the seas. The piece of land in the middle is now known as Turkey but was known as Anatolia in the time of the Ottoman Empire.

What is the difference between Anatolia and Asia Minor? Asia Minor refers only to central and western parts of modern-day Turkey while Anatolia refers to almost all of the land now associated with Turkey(Thracian, 2011).

Anatolia is covered by two mountain sets. The Pontic Mountains run along the northern side of the country while the Taurus Mountains run along the southern and eastern edges of Anatolia. Other than these two large mountain chains, many volcanoes also populate the land. Mt. Ararat is the highest peak in this land of Anatolia, rising to a height of 16,000 feet. Mt. Nemrut, though a lot lower, has one of the largest volcano craters in the world. The crater is over four miles(over 6 kilometers) in width. That is certainly a large crater! These volcanoes are not known to erupt often; however, the eruption of Mt. Hassan played a large role in Anatolian history ("Geography of Anatolia and Asia Minor").

This country does not lack water as can be seen by the abundance of seas surrounding it. However, there are also many rivers in this land including the Tigris, Euphrates, Hermos, Meander, Sangarios, and Halys Rivers. These rivers provide fresh water for the inhabitants no matter their whereabouts. There are also many small lakes and ponds throughout the land.

As can be seen by the topography described above, the land of Anatolia is a very rich, fertile land. Because the land is so well fed by

water, it can easily be used to grow plants or raise animals. The Turks did both once they settled in the land, allowing for easier living for the inhabitants.

Demographics

Many different people groups lived in the Anatolian area when the Turks began to take over. Because of the nomadic state in which most people groups lived, there was a wide range of ethnicities. Some of the largest populations included the Assyrians, Armenians, Greeks, Lydians, and Arabs. There were other nomadic groups populating the land as well. However, these other groups were smaller and not as well known. The groups mainly kept to themselves unless a problem was started by another one.

As for the Turks themselves, they are typically divided into six groups: Oghuz Turks, Kipchak, Karluk, Siberian, Chuvash, and Sakha. The Oghuz Turks is the name of the group who lived and currently live in western Anatolia while the other five groups live in eastern Anatolia. The division of the groups is mainly based on language and culture. While they are all Turks, there are still some differences between the divisions.

Physically, Turks can range in appearance. Because of their variety of roots, Turkish appearance can range from Mongolian to darker skin and dark eyes to lighter skin and light eyes. A lighter complexion is not as common but is not impossible.

Language

What language was most popular in the Anatolian Empire? Because the Greeks were a larger people group, those who moved within their

area would begin learning the Greek language ("A Brief History of Turkish Languages"). In the north and east of Anatolia, other languages of the smaller people groups continued to remain popular.

As the Byzantines tried to control the land, they tried to make everyone speak Greek and believe in the same gods as the Greeks. The Byzantines did this by moving Armenian or Arab leaders to different parts of Anatolia, in an attempt to weaken the small, distinctive people groups.

This very move on the Byzantines' part is what weakened Anatolia enough for the Turks to fight their way in as described above in the war of 1072.

The Turkish language does not use the Arabic alphabet. When they moved into the Anatolian area, they did not adapt to the Greek language, but continued with their own distinct languages, different according to the six groups of Turks described in the demographics above. There can be no exact classification as the languages are somewhat mixed and similar in certain areas. This is due to much intermarriage with those peoples already living in the Anatolian area.

Conclusion

The Turks had a very bountiful land from which to feed and grow armies. With their religion uniting them and a land that kept them well fed, it seemed as though these Turks would be unstoppable as they created the famous Ottoman Empire.

Chapter 2: The Ottoman Expansion

The Ottoman Empire was a very successful empire during its time. It became one of the largest empires on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, and it lasted longer than six hundred years. During its highest point, this empire stretched over three continents. How did the Ottoman Empire reach such success?

After their takeover of the Anatolian land, it was only a short time before the group hungered for independence, their own land, and their own rulers.

The beginning of the Ottoman Empire was as a Beylik under the Seljuks in the 13th century. "Beylik" basically means any group or territory under the "jurisdiction of a bey."("The Definition of Beylic", dictionary.com). The Ottoman Empire was exclusive in that they were living in their own culture, language, and ideas. However, the Suljiks still had the final word over the Ottomans. They did not like this idea, and through conquering various pieces of land, became an independent empire in 1299.

Who was responsible for this declaration of independence?

Osman I

Osman I was the founder of the Ottoman Empire. However, he was a leader much before the Ottoman Empire became a reality.

Osman I was born between 1258 and 1259. His exact birthdate is

unclear as records were not as meticulous in those times. Osman I was descended from the Oghuz group of Turks, and his father was named Ertogrul. Ertogrul's father is widely accepted to be one of the leaders who helped invade Anatolia in the first place.

Ertogrul had a small group of followers who were looking for a land to inhabit. When seeing a battle, Ertogrul and his followers joined in on the weaker army's side, not knowing the reason for the battle. When over, Ertogrul learned that the battle had helped pushed the Mongols out of Anatolia. In gratitude, the Seljuk sultan gave Ertogrul a piece of land and bade him to rule over it. While Ertogrul tried to expand his rule over the course of his lifetime, he did not meet with much success ("Osman I" Encyclopedia).

Osman I's young adulthood was not a happy time for him as he was refused the woman he wanted to marry by her overprotective father. Doomed to unhappiness, Osman I tried to move forward with his life. One night, he had a very distinct dream about a prosperous tree that bore fruit and was supported by the largest mountains known at that time period. The tree seemed to be taking over the entire world. Osman I saw this dream as an indication of his future. He was to be a ruler of a great kingdom.

The part of this dream that was life changing was where the tree came from. The beautiful woman that Osman I loved, Malkhatun, had "given birth" in the dream to the moon which had created the tree. Osman I talked to Malkhatun's father one last time, telling him of the dream and the power the two were meant to share as a pair. Malkhatun's father took the dream as a sign as well and relented to let his daughter marry Osman I. While this story may simply be a legend or may be based on truth, the result is that Osman I did, in fact, marry Malkhatun after much disagreement with her father.

After Ertogrul's death in 1288, Osman I took over his father's small patch of land to rule. However, unlike his father, Osman began making advances in taking land around him. He grouped up with groups of Turcomans to fight against the Byzantines(Sansal). The Seljuks who had been somewhat supporting him throughout his battle for more land were left leaderless when their leader Alaaddin was exiled(Sansal). This left Osman I the perfect opportunity to unite the Seljuks with his own people as he broke off to form the Ottoman Empire.

The official date of independence is noted as January 17 of the year 1299. This is the date when Osman I stopped paying tribute to the Mongol emperor ("Osman I," Encyclopedia.com). This act indicated that he would no longer submit to those above him.

From that time when Osman I declared himself and his empire free from Mongolia's rule, Osman I experienced many successes. He began reaching out and taking over small cities such as cities west of the Sakarya River and north of Mount Olympus. His armies even helped him capture important fortresses. One of their key captures was when they captured Yenishehir. Yenishehir was an important city for the enemy, and Osman I used it as the capital city of his new Ottoman kingdom.

However, even through his many successes, three fortresses still stood beyond his power: Bursa, Nicaea, and Nicomedia. These three fortresses were important trade centers. Without having them on his side, Osman I could not consider himself a world leader. Osman I continued to push forward and conquer more and more land until he had practically isolated Bursa and prepared it for his attack in the year 1308.

Nonetheless, Bursa was prepared for an attack like this. Even under siege, they were still able to receive provisions from Mudanya. Osman I knew he did not have enough power to take the city through force, so he waited out the city, hoping it would eventually run out of supplies. This plan proved not to be working what with Bursa's secret connection with Mudanya. In 1321, Osman I finally was able to take control of Mudanya, really cutting of Bursa's connection with other parts of the world. However, Bursa was a stubborn city and refused to give in so easily. Bursa did not surrender until another five years had passed. Finally, Bursa was under Osman I's control in 1326.

This capture was one of the reasons that 1326 was such a turning point for the Ottoman Empire. While Osman I had captured much land up until this year, the captures had been mainly lowly populated farmland or small towns. The victories, while giving Osman I more land, did not make him an important contributor to the rest of the world. Bursa's place as "a major commercial center" ("Osman I," Encyclopedia.com) made Osman I and his Ottoman Empire finally recognized by the rest of the world.

This year is the year that Osman I put the Ottoman Empire under his son's rule. As Osman I lay on his deathbed, he heard about the success of his son. Knowing that Bursa had been his last success, Osman I gave strict orders that he was to be buried there. He also commanded that Bursa was to be made the new capital city of the Ottoman Empire. A few months later, Osman I died, and his requested orders were followed.

Osman I's rule is known for being the time when new laws were brought into his kingdom, based on the Seljuk's laws, but different in their own right. Osman I was also known for adopting the idea of

taxes in his kingdom. He was a well-respected man, and he is remembered in many records as being just and righteous. Another important note about Osman I's rule is that he did not discriminate between the many people groups living under his rule, claiming one was better than the other. He treated all groups in a fair manner. However, Osman I was ruthless in the obedience he demanded from everyone.

After Osman I's death, the kingdom passed seamlessly into his son's hands, and Orhan was the new ruler.

Orhan

Orhan, also said Orkhan, might be seen as strange in world history as he was not a man hungry for power ("Reign of Orhan Gazi"). While many rulers abused their power and looked for ways to have more, Orhan asked his brother to share the throne with him. His brother, being the noble man he was, denied Orhan, saying that their father, Osman I had wanted Orhan to rule. However, Orhan insisted, and eventually, his brother relented and helped him rule the Ottoman Empire.

Before Orhan became a ruler, he would go with his father on his father's army reigns. His father taught him his ideals and morals and fighting strategies. Orhan was prepared to take over after his father's large success in defeating Bursa.

During the beginning of Orhan's reign, there was a time of peace that lasted around twenty years. Many Ghazis who were living in nearby areas came to live in the Ottoman Kingdom because they were also against Byzantine rule. During this twenty year time period, Orhan worked on building up his army and on benefiting the empire. Part of

what he was creating was a navy in the Aegean Sea. He knew in order to have an advantage against other countries, he would need something that others did not have.

Orhan also worked to benefit those who were already under him. He began building "mosques, dervish lodges, charitable institutions and schools in the many important cities," (A'goston, 442).

During this time of prosperity for the kingdom, Orhan married John VI's daughter, Theodora. John VI was a Byzantine ruler, and the marriage caused the Ottomans to live in a cautious time of peace with the Byzantines. Orhan began making more military advances, taking small pieces of land but nothing critical.

However, after his marriage, Orhan had the freedom to take over the Balkans. He made slow advances toward some of the key fortresses. Fortunately for Orhan, an earthquake came in the year 1354 that destroyed the strong wall of Gallipoli. With its walls destroy, Gallipoli was an easy target for Orhan's ready troops. In 1354, Gallipoli was officially under Ottoman rule. Gallipoli is a peninsula that is now considered part of Turkey. However, in those times, it was more under Bulgaria's reign. This advance "helped them make a permanent grip in Europe," ("Reign of Orhan Gazi").

Whereas the Ottoman Empire was an empire strictly in Anatolia beforehand, it now started creeping into other continents, making a change that would affect the future generations of Ottomans.

One of the unique parts of Orhan's conquests is that he did not disallow or try to control the religion practiced, the language spoken,

or the marriages created. However, naturally, as he and his men began taking over more land, the languages began to mix. The religions changed. There were many intercultural marriages. This combination of cultures served to help the new conquered towns to feel as though they were part of the Ottoman Empire.

Here is the difference between Orhan's behavior and the general behavior of a conqueror. If a commander conquers a town and demands that everyone become a Muslim and marry a woman from their own town, then the people feel repressed. They are not happy to be under the new ruler, and there is a constant under-brewing of rebellion.

However, if a ruler comes in and lets the believe believe what they like, marry who they like, and even move to a different part of the kingdom if they desire, the people will feel freedom. They will not feel as though they are losing something but as though they are gaining something. They will feel a burden lifted from them if the ruler before was particularly cruel.

Because Orhan ruled in the latter way, those under him began creating their own, unique, mixed culture that made the Ottoman Empire distinct from other empires. Instead of being one king (or khan) ruling over very different towns with different cultures, Orhan was ruling over a completely new people group that had created itself under his rule and found its identity in being Ottoman.

Orhan's type of ruling created a "hybrid that enabled the continued expansion of the state and which would come to be a fundamental characteristic of the emerging Ottoman Empire," (A'goston, 444). Those he conquered did not fight back against him but helped him

fight to conquer more land. Orhan's clever strategy helped him become a popular ruler. However, his popularity was not completely based on ruling strategies.

Orhan was generally seen as a kind soul who genuinely cared for others. He was generous, strong, and patient. Like his father, Orhan was seen as a fair ruler, which helped his subjects obey him out of admiration instead of obligation.

In 1360, Orhan resigned from his position of ruling the Ottoman Empire, and he handed the power over to his son, Murad. For the final two years of his life, Orhan lived in Bursa quietly.

Orhan died in 1362, leaving behind an amazing legacy. His last accomplishment was conquering Didymoteichon, and the kingdom he left behind spanned almost all of Anatolia with small patches in Europe. Orhan stands as the longest-living Ottoman ruler as he lived to be seventy-nine years old, reigning for thirty-four years. This reign is also one of the longest Ottoman ruler reigns.

Because of the many cultural advances Orhan made in regard to building educational buildings, Orhan's reign is seen to be one of the transforming steps in the rise of the Ottoman Empire. He not only conquered land and people groups, but he bettered their state of life. In addition to the achievements mentioned above, Orhan minted silver coins to be used specifically in the Ottoman Empire. For all of these achievements, Orhan is called one of the best rulers of the Ottoman Empire.

Murad I

Murad I was the third ruler of the Ottoman Empire. Born in 1326, Murad took over officially in 1362 when his father, Orhan, passed away. During Murad I's reign, he more than tripled the amount of territory under Ottoman rule- from 29,000 square miles to 100,000 square miles (A'goston, 397). Additionally, the military methods and strategies used under Murad I developed his army, allowing him to defeat other areas more easily.

Murad I was not the heir who was supposed to take over his father's throne. Murad I had an older brother named Suleyman Pasha. Suleyman Pasha was an integral part of his father's army techniques. He helped his father defeat Gallipoli. Unfortunately, in 1357, Suleyman Pasha died when he fell from his horse while engaging in one of his favorite sports: falconry ("Suleyman Pasha(son of Orhan)").

His brother's unfortunate death made Murad I the next heir in line for his father's throne. While he was not born as the intended ruler of the Ottoman Empire, Murad I did an impressive job in his expansion of the empire's boundaries as described above.

Murad I is often accused of having expanded his kingdom strictly through holy wars, that is, wars based on his Muslim religion. However, many more factors than just religion-driven wars played into Murad I's success. Here are three factors that helped Murad I enlarge the territory under the Ottoman Empire.

First of all, Murad I used marriages to benefit the Ottoman Empire. He would seek out beneficial matches that would help soothe over a bumpy relationship between the empire and another country. Another reason for a strategic marriage match would be to attain more armies fighting on his side. One example of a strategic move on Murad I's

part was when he married Thamar, the sister of a czar. As part of the marriage dowry, Murad I received some land in Asia Minor. Additionally, because Murad I was married to Thamar, her father's kingdom would be willing to help Murad I in war to protect his daughter. Murad I could instigate a war with a third party country, and he would have another army to support him. He may give a little land as a 'thank you;' however, he would still keep the main part of the land for the Ottomans.

Secondly, Murad I expanded his kingdom by inviting Turkish speaking Muslims into the land that was already under Ottoman rule. Sometimes, he offered them refuge from difficult living circumstances. In other situations, he simply offered a friendly living environment. In this way, Murad I increased his number of subjects and supporters. He could also increase the size of his army.

Last of all, Murad I worked with bribes. He would give pieces of land, called fiefs, to those who did not completely agree with his ideas (A'goston, 397). These pieces of land functioned as a bribe to help those, generally Christians who were somewhat rich and had a following, to publically support his actions.

Even with these other weapons at his disposal, Murad I still did work at times through using his army to gain more land. At the very beginning of his reign, Murad I gained Thrace, Adrianople, and Philippopolis. Murad I renamed Adrianople Edirne and used the city as his new capital ("Murad I").

In 1366, Amadeus VI of Savoy helped the Byzantines and recaptured Gallipoli. However, with Murad I in charge, the Ottomans fought back. Gallipoli did not remain in enemy hands for long. By the next

year, the Gallipoli was once more part of the Ottoman Empire.

Murad I also gained other large territories through several important battles during his reign. One of these battles was the Battle of the Maritsa River.This battle happened near the end of 1371 and led to an important victory for the Ottomans. After his defeat of Thrace, Murad I also attained the Maritsa River Valley. The Christian groups in the Balkans area resisted Murad I, but they were not successful. After the Christian groups were so easily defeated, the king of the Serbian lands, Vukasin, built up an army and marched against the Ottomans.

While the Ottomans were greatly outnumbered, they were fierce warriors. The Ottomans "killed large numbers of Serbs, including Vukasin, and drove many of the survivors into the river to be drowned" ("Battle of the Maritsa River").

Because of the victory in this battle, Murad I took over sizeable pieces of land in Serbia and Bulgaria. However, even these victories did not leave Murad I satisfied, and he continued looking for even more achievements. His next accomplishments included capturing Sofia, Nis, Tokat, Tekke, and Hamid. Some of these were gained through marriage, while others were gained through war.

Some Turks in outlying principalities formed a group to work against the Ottomans and stop their expansion. This uprising showed that Murad I's many ideas of how to expand without using war did not always make all the conquered happy. However, after only a year in operation, this group was impeded at Konya in 1386 by Murad I.

As Murad I pushed forward for even more territory, a group of the

northern Serbian kings stopped him from taking over their land for two full years. While Murad I could not defeat the Serbian kings, he was not useless. While that front was closed to the Ottoman Empire at the moment, Murad I focused on others areas that needed his attention. He worked toward capturing all cities surrounding Constantinople, which was a major power center at the time.

True to his reign, Murad I was killed in his camp during the Battle of Kosovo. A serbian noble pretended to be deserting his army, which allowed him to enter the Ottoman camp. Using force, the noble broke into Murad I's personal tent and used a poisoned dart to stab him to death ("Battle of Kosovo"). Murad I's son immediately took over when Murad I died that day in 1389.

Murad I's reign was integral in creating new military strategies. Murad I is well known for his creation of the Ottoman Janissary Corps. The Janissary Corps was an elite group of warriors who acted as bodyguards to the commander. His reign was the first time that the idea of infantry was really incorporated into the fighting scene with much success, as seen with Murad I's many victories.

Many soldiers were prisoners who had been captured and converted to Islam. Once the soldiers proved their worthiness, they might be given a position in the Janissary Corps. However, they could be distinguished even farther. The Janissaries who were especially honorable and relentless in completing their duties were given special privileges for demonstrating their allegiance. Started under Murad I's rule, the band of soldiers grew to "well over 100,000 by the early nineteenth century(Tucker). Later on, however, the Janissary Corps was not as faithful as it started out to be.

Janissaries worked on speed as their main advantage over other armies. If they saw a break in the enemy line, they would rush in and begin fighting before the enemy was prepared for the soldiers. The Janissaries were one of the first groups, and certainly one of the most well known, to begin wearing matching armor and head protection. Their lethal battle techniques made them useful not only for the attacks made during Murad I's reign but also for hundreds of years later. His organization of this special group of warriors is one reason that Murad I was so successful in his drive for more land.

Murad I also created the position of elite judge that had the last word in any legal battle. This judge was also in charge of taking care of the army and guiding it in any strategizing steps. Additionally, other steps in the formation of government and ruling were established during Murad I's time as sultan.

Murad I was a ruthless warrior. He made heartless battle decisions that were excellent strategy but sacrificed many soldiers' lives. He was obeyed out of fear, but he still dealt with more rebellions than either his father or his grandfather had in the past years of the Ottoman Empire. In the end, Murad I acquired much more land for the Ottoman Empire and continued to help benefit it and make it even larger right up until the day of his death.

Bayezid I

In the year 1389, Bayezid I had to unexpectedly take over the throne when his father, Murad I, was killed in battle. However, Bayezid I had some practice in leadership. He was motivational toward other members of the army and earned the nickname "Yildirim" which means thunderbolt or lighting. His nickname came from the rapid way in which he was able to prepare and lead an army ("Rein of Yildirim Bayezid-Ottoman Empire").

Once he succeeded his father. Bayezid I's cruel character soon showed itself in his quick assassination of his younger brother. He ordered his brother to be strangled so that his younger brother would not try to seize the throne. Later on, this practice of murder became a common practice in the Ottoman Empire. However, at this time, it was not as familiar.

A few months after this execution, during 1390, Bayezid I married the princess of Serbia, Princess Olivera. Because the Battle of Kosovo was between the Ottomans and the Serbians, this marriage was an attempt to smooth over the differences and move forward without any further problems.

The Ottomans' victory had made Serbia a province, so the marriage was actually quite beneficial for the princess as Bayezid I was a powerful individual. Olivera was a kind, gentle woman, and she had a calming effect on Bayezid I's violent temperament. While Olivera was only one of four wives, not even taking into consideration the harem of concubines, she was still able to influence Bayezid I to make decisions that benefited the Serbian people ("Olivera Despina").

Bayezid I continued struggling with the Serbians throughout the next year, even though he was not attacking innocent people. He tried to be a considerate leader. The Ottoman army went against the Serbian army, and in 1391, General Pashayigit won the battle and began using the city as "an important base of operations" ("Bayezid I").

Bayezid I worked on his main goal, which was unifying Anatolia. He planned to do this by both adding new territory and inflicting strict regulations on all participants in his kingdom. During the time

between the end of the Battle of Kosovo and his important victory in 1391, Bayezid I gained various territories including the following: "Aydin, Saruhan, Germiyan, Mantese, and Hamid" (A'goston, 81).

Frustrated with Bayezid I's savage rule, the ruler of Kastamonu made an alliance against Bayezid I in order to protect the Black Sea kingdom. Not being able to focus on two attacks at once, Bayezid I left the siege of Konya alone and focused his attention on this ruler who had betrayed his alliance. After a ferocious battle, Bayezid I won and killed the ruler of Kastamonu. Additionally, Bayezid I took all of his territories, making the Ottoman Empire even larger.

Byzantine, previously defeated and compelled to fight alongside the Ottoman Empire, decided to work on their internal problems. The Byzantines hoped that once they were a united kingdom once again, they could reach for help toward the Christians outside the situation and be able to defeat the Ottomans, who were mainly a Muslim community. However, the Ottomans were what would be considered a "superpower," and they caught wind of what the Byzantines were planning. The Ottomans laid siege to Constantinople, the Byzantine capital, for eight years in an attempt to suppress the uprising.

At the beginning of this struggle, Bayezid I had a castle, called Andalu Hisari, and this castle was built a few miles northward of Constantinople (A'goston, 81). Andalu Hisari would later play an important role in Ottoman history. Unfortunately, Bayezid I could not go through to see the success of his plan as other areas were calling his attention.

Forced to forego the siege on Constantinople, Bayezid I went to address problems on his borders. Hungary, having a long-standing

feud with the Ottoman Empire, had broken through the river which was the southern border of the Ottoman Empire. Bayezid I confronted them in a battle that did not last long. He was successful in 1393, defeating Turnovo and giving Hungary more reason to worry.

The King of Luxembourg began assisting Hungary by helping extend its territory into the Serbian area. The Hungarians decided that if they were going to be under Ottoman rule, they wanted to have some sense of power over themselves, functioning as client-states instead of simply being territory dependent on the Ottoman Empire's will. Bayezid I did not like this plan and invaded Wallachia, deposing the current ruler and replacing him with a man who was completely under Bayezid I's control. The king of Luxembourg fought back, once again entering Wallachia and replacing Bayezid I's ruler with his own.

In 1396, all of the Ottoman Empire's enemies united to struggle against their common enemy. They thought that with an army of over 30,000 men, they would be sure to secure a victory. However, they were surprised by the power held by the Ottoman forces. A quick defeat with many deaths was in order for those opposing the Ottomans.

Now that Bayezid I did not have so many scattered attacks on his kingdom, he could focus back on Constantinople and continue his siege. He did not completely focus on the siege, however, as Bayezid I could not resist the opportunity to defeat two more rulers and take their land as well. Alaeddin Bey of Karaman and Kach Burhaneddin of Sivas were defeated in 1397 and 1398 respectively.

In 1400, Timur began to rise in power. Timur focused, not on disliking the Ottomans in general, but disliking Bayezid I's type of rule. He

gathered support from appealing to Bayezid I's own troops, who were beginning to dislike the ruthless ruler. As Bayezid I continued to expand his authority, a showdown between the two leaders was unavoidable.

In 1402, a battle between the two took place: the Battle of Ankara. Timur was the victorious leader, and he took Bayezid I into his captivity. To reward the leaders who had helped him, he restored them their rightful land. The circumstances surrounding Bayezid I's death are a bit uncertain. In some accounts, he appears to have been mistreated by Timur. Other accounts discuss his kingly treatment. However, he did die after a year, more or less, in captivity.

Because the Ottoman systems of money, law, and government had already taken root, it would be hard to change them. The fact is that they were not changed even after the sultan was taken from his position. While it may seem as though the Ottoman Empire was defeated at this point, in reality, it was only the beginning of their long rule. Timur could not lead the scattered and confused citizens, and Mehmed I soon took control.

The Janissaries, as discussed earlier, became more popular during Bayezid I's rule. Bayezid I focused on training them to accomplish special missions. The group was seen as a class above Bayezid I's other warriors. Bayezid I, generally seen as a cruel man, was the first to pay salaries to his soldiers ("Reign of Yildirim Bayezid- Ottoman Empire"). Perhaps one reason that Bayezid I was so adamant about following this practice was that he did not want his army turning against him.

Bayezid I also developed the Ottoman Empire culturally. He was a very religious man, and he supported the construction of many

mosques, including a famous mosque in Bursa. Because of his rigid alliance to his beliefs, Bayezid I also believed in direct justice for each member of his kingdom. He continued to rapidly take over more and more kingdoms; however, Bayezid I tried to give just punishments to those under his rule.

While Bayezid I did make these positive changes in the empire, what with paying his warriors and building mosques, he was also ruthless. His most important goal was claiming more and more land. He was very successful during the majority of his lifetime. However, when he was defeated, the Ottoman Empire lost a majority of the land gained during his rule.

The successor of Bayezid I's rule was not clear cut as Bayezid I did not appoint anyone. Four of Bayezid I's sons who survived the bloody battle and wanted the throne began a battle known as the Ottoman Interregnum. This period lasted for eleven years, ending in 1413. Bayezid I's son Mehmed was the victorious one, and he became the next ruler of the Ottoman Empire, broken as it was.

Mehmed I

Once Mehmed I emerged victorious from the struggle with his brothers, he was able to survey the Ottoman Empire and begin picking up the pieces.

Byzantine had taken the Ottoman Interregnum period to make advances into the Ottoman Empire, taking back land and power. Realizing their opportunity, they hand-picked the next Ottoman ruler. Mehmed I's victory is largely due to the backing of the Byzantines. Mehmed I made Edirne one of the most powerful cities during his reign, using it as a steering wheel for his kingdom.

Mehmed I, "widely known as the 'second founder' ("Mehmed I"), began making small advances to gain back some of the land lost when his father was defeated. After a short time with Mehmed I reigning, his brother Mustafa emerged and made a request. Mustafa had been held captive along with their father. However, he escaped and bode his time while the various sons of Bayezid I battled out who would be ruler. Once it was settled and Mehmed I was definitely the ruler of the country, Mustafa came forward and requested to be given part of the empire. Mehmed I, backed by the Byzantines, refused his brother and fought him in two important upcoming battles.

Mustafa did not have the forces necessary to come close to defeating his brother. After several battles, the Byzantines, working with Mehmed I, exiled Mustafa to Lemnos, a small island.

Later on, Mehmed I faced another plot against his reign that including his nephew Orhan. Mehmed I was never sure of the details of the plot but remained cautious of any close relatives as they all seemed to pose a threat. Other than these family threats, Mehmed I's reign was rather peaceful. He continued to take back the land that had previously been part of the Ottoman Empire.

One important event in Mehmed I's rule was when Sheikh Bedreddin rose against him in 1416. Bedreddin waged war in an attempt to have land shared equally and dispel the taxes ("Sheikh Bedreddin"). The rebellion lasted four years and ended in 1420 when Mehmed I's grand vizier captured and hanged Bedreddin.

Mehmed I's rule only lasted eight years officially, though as one of the most powerful brothers, he had also been making any necessary

decisions that had to be made during the Ottoman Interregnum. His reign, while he gained more land, was mainly focused on reorganizing the empire's structure, which had been somewhat trampled after Bayezid I's defeat. Mehmed I also built schools and buildings to assist the poor. Mehmed I was focused on helping others as much as possible. He died in 1421 with a clear plan for succession to avoid as much fighting as he had endured with his brothers.

Murad II

As a child, Murad II was recognized as governor over Amasya Sanjak. When Mehmed I, his father died in 1421, Murad II was named the succeeding sultan even though he was only sixteen years old ("Murad II"). However, Murad II was not allowed peace for long.

After only a short time as sultan, the Byzantine emperor let Mustafa free. This is the same Mustafa who wanted to take the kingdom from his brother, Mehmed I. Mustafa, backed by the Byzantines, claimed to be the rightful heir. The reason for the Byzantines' backing of Mustafa was based on a secret agreement the empire had made with Mustafa; they would get him in a power position if he repaid them in a gift of land. Mustafa was widely successful in the beginning. He built up an army of Turkish soldiers and defeated the commander Murad II sent to destroy him. Mustafa continued marching forward.

Mustafa arrived at the capital city, which at that time was Edirne, and defeated another segment of Murad II's army. However, Murad II was waiting and ready to attack Mustafa. In a fierce battle, Mustafa was defeated and fled. Murad II faithfully hunted him down and put Mustafa to death for his treasonous crimes.

Riding on this victory, Murad II created a new army called the Azeb

("Murad II") and used it to storm Constantinople, a job his father had not been able to complete. The Byzantines continued stirring up trouble by sending Murad II's younger brother, also known as Mustafa, to attack Bursa, an important trade center. This rebellion ended much as the first. While Murad II had to abandon the siege on Constantinople to address the situation, he still stopped his younger brother and had him executed (even though his brother was only thirteen years old at the time).

Murad II continued to make progress in gaining new lands. He at first struggled to reconquer Karaman, the lands that had belonged to his father. However, when the ruler of Karaman died, Murad II took advantage of the situation to take the lands from the next, unprepared ruler. The lands he gained included Karaman but also extended farther (A'goston, 399).

Murad II next planned to take over the Balkans by capturing the most important cities and controlling the other lands from there. However, this decision brought him up against two strong adversaries: Hungary and Venice. Venice was defeated after a series of battles. Hungary, on the other hand, had developed a more advanced defense system. In lieu of simply having a border that the Ottoman Empire and Hungary shared, Hungary worked on building up forts and small populations of "neutral" land between the two. These would serve as a barrier between the two nations, with the intention of preventing as many battles that killed innocent people.

However, Murad II was able to successfully take control of Serbia, the central power of Hungary, and add it to his kingdom after the death of its leader. Now, the empire of the Ottomans had reached the extension Bayezid I had held when he was emperor.

Laying a siege of Belgrade, Murad II hoped to expand his kingdom even further. However, this siege prompted action by Hungary and various allies to unite against the Ottomans and stop their steps forward toward more land. The outside countries also became united through an agreement between the Catholic and orthodox churches about acceptance of religion. This helped unite various countries that did not necessarily share the Muslim beliefs that were widespread in the Ottoman Empire. Murad II continued trying to make advances, but this new alliance fought back against him. As the alliance led a crusade against Murad II in the Balkans, Murad II realized that war should not be his main focus. He began striving toward peace.

The Hungarian-Ottoman Treaty was signed and made official in 1444 (A'goston, 400). With this treaty in place, Murad II abdicated and left his son Mehmed II in his place. His son was only twelve at the time.

Less than two months later, Murad II was recalled from his peaceful retreat to defend the empire. The Hungarians were marching against the Ottomans. The Hungarian king died in battle, and Murad II adhered to the agreement created earlier that year, giving Hungary the territories on which they had decided. After settling this dispute, Murad II once more returned to his retirement.

A few years later, Murad II was once again called back to deal with an invading situation. Although Murad II had never technically assumed the throne again when he was first called back, he did this time. Officially becoming sultan again, Murad II experienced victory in the Battle of Kosovo Polje in Serbia, which took place in 1448. Murad II continued as sultan until he died in 1451.

An unusual factor of Murad II's reign is the way in which he ran the

government. The Turkish rulers did not report constantly to Murad II. Basic ground rules were established, and the rulers in the Balkans acted without further consultation, freeing Murad II to work on other projects than just day to day problems within the empire.

His rule and the conquests he made were integral to the Ottoman Empire's reestablishment of its authority in Europe. Because of the Ottoman Interregnum, where his father had had to win the power and the kingdom had been without an official ruler, the Ottoman Empire had been in a shaky state. However, Murad II adjusted that by making new conquests and establishing peace between himself and the Hungarians, both through marriage and through a treaty. Murad II is given the credit for really recreating the Ottoman Empire after all the destruction.

Mehmed II

Mehmed II had ruled for a short time from 1444 to 1446 before his father had taken the throne back to control the incoming invaders. He was only twelve to sixteen years old at the time, and as discussed above, he could not defeat the invaders and asked his father to come help. His father refused, and Mehmed II became angry, writing this in a letter to his father: "If you are the Sultan, come and lead your armies. If I am the Sultan, I hereby order you to come and lead my armies"("Mehmed the Conqueror," Wikipedia).

When his father finally died in 1451, Mehmed II was more than ready to prove himself when he was finally Sultan again. He felt embarrassed that he had been unable to protect the kingdom, and he had needed his father to come back and rule. Now was Mehmed II's chance to show how strong and capable he was as a leader. Though his rule did not start out well, Mehmed II became a very memorable leader.

Mehmed II's first order of business upon becoming Sultan again was to build up a strong protection for the Ottoman Empire. Noticing the navy was not as strong as it could be, Mehmed II worked on fortifying the navy, so he would be ready to battle for Constantinople. The Bosporus Straits boasted a fortress, or army base, on one side that Mehmed II's great grandfather had built. Mehmed II completely took the strait by building a fortress on the other side. Now, nothing could pass through unless approved by him.

Mehmed II's cruel practices were made obvious in the regulations he made. Each vessel wanting to pass through had to pay a tax. Any ship that tried to pass through without paying was sunk. If there were any survivors, they were beheaded. Mehmed II displayed no mercy (or weakness as he would have thought of it). He even placed the captain's head in a visible place to all passerby so that they too would not try to evade the tax.

As Mehmed II's army approached Constantinople, his sheikh found the tombs of one of Muhammad's famous assistants. Later on, once Constantinople was under their control, they built a mosque there. Mehmed II had two purposes in doing so. First of all, he wanted to show what a great warrior he was. Secondly, he wanted to show the importance of taking control of the Muslim world.

In April of 1453, Mehmed II began attacking Constantinople. He had somewhere between 80,000 and 100,000 men fighting for him (A'goston, 143). One of the most exciting parts of his army supplies were some new cannons. However, at the beginning, Constantinople stood strong. They had a boom chain and twenty-eight warships protecting their harbor, and while outnumbered, they fought hard.

Mehmed II showed his cleverness in his next move. Seeing as how the harbor was blocked, he transported some of his smaller ships overland to go around the troops protecting the harbor's border. When those in Constantinople realized what was happening, it was too late. Mehmed II had already taken control of that area.

Constantinople was holding out for the Venetians to come rescue them and provide food and supplies. However, after a time of waiting, they discovered the Venetians were not coming. Meanwhile, Mehmed II launched another vicious attack on those in the city on May 29th of the same year. At one point, those in Constantinople could not find their leader or receive orders from him, and the Janissaries, the elite fighting group, took advantage of their confusion and made a successful attack. The emperor of Constantinople fought as a common man and died in battle. With little food left to provide for its occupants and an imminent defeat looming ahead, Constantinople surrendered on May 29th.

Once Constantinople was captured, Mehmed II made the city his new capital for the Ottoman Empire. Sadly, he allowed his soldiers and all army participants to plunder the city for three days. This resulted in many murdered occupants; those who survived were left without possessions. Afterward, Mehmed II called peace onto the city and appointed a new governor in charge of bringing the city back to its former glory, except under Mehmed II's hand now.

Now that he possessed Constantinople, long seen as the capital of the Roman Empire, Mehmed II proclaimed himself "Caesar" of the Roman Empire as well. The Eastern Orthodox Church recognized him at the rightful Roman Empire ruler while the Catholic church staunchly refused to recognize him by that title. Western Europe was divided in those who supported Mehmed II's move and those who did not.

Mehmed II began tracing his lineage to prove with whom he was related; he pointed out that one of his ancestors married a Byzantine princess, so he could claim legal right to the throne. The emperor that died in battle as Mehmed II was taking Constantinople had no children and would have been succeeded by his nephews. Mehmed II brought these nephews, who were children at the time, in to serve at his Constantinople palace. They both grew up to have positions in Mehmed II's empire. The elder became a governor- general of the Balkans, and the younger became admiral of an Ottoman fleet and governor of a province. He even served as Grand Vizier with Mehmed II's son.

Now that Mehmed II was in control of Constantinople, he began advancing toward the Serbian area. Once again, Mehmed II reached back in his lineage and used some marriage connections to lay claim to the Serbian territory. He received a few islands this way, but he wanted more. The Serbians fought the Ottomans for two years, and the Ottomans reached Belgrade but failed to capture it on their attempt in 1456. Belgrade did not fall until nearly seventy years later.

In the next few years, confusion broke out in the Serbian lands. The ruler died, leaving his widow and three sons. The youngest quickly killed his mother and exiled his brothers, making himself ruler. However, he died shortly afterward, and the oldest brother came back to take the throne. Problems continued, and the Serbian lands were eventually offered to Bosnia's future king.

Mehmed II, who had been fighting for these lands for years, was furious. He used his army's power to capture Smederevo in 1459 and end the discussion once and for all. The Serbian lands sunk into the Ottoman Empire.

Southward of the Ottoman lands was an area called the Despotate of the Morea. The region had been invaded before by previous Ottoman rulers; however, it had not been completely conquered. The Ottomans attacked the empire, and the leaders did not help the citizens at all. The citizens became angry and began rebelling against their leaders. At this point, the leaders called the Ottomans to help them put down the rebellion. After a few more disagreements between the parties and the Moreans' refusal to pay their dues to the Ottomans, the Ottomans took over the land, capturing one leader while the other fled. In 1460, the land belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

Mehmed II continued to rise to his nickname, Mehmed the Conqueror, as he conquered yet another land area. The emperor of Trebizond realized that Mehmed II might try to come after him soon, and he made arrangements for protection. As Mehmed II was taking care of Belgrade, one of the governors under him made an advance toward Trebizond. He did not capture the land, but he did enough damage that he was able to require the area to pay tribute to the Ottomans.

In Trebizond, a new emperor came to power, and he began speaking quite proudly about his abilities. His words reached Mehmed II and made him angry. Among the new emperor's demands was the requirement that Mehmed II retract the tribute he laid upon the previous emperor. This infuriated Mehmed II and caused him to make a move toward Trebizond and lay siege on the land. The city only lasted a month under siege, and it became a part of the Ottoman Empire in 1461.

Wallachia was an important piece of land, because it was what stood between the Ottoman Empire and Hungary, the two strongest powers at the time. Both kingdoms were constantly trying to conquer the

territory to gain more power. Mehmed II extracted a yearly tribute from Wallachia in exchange for freedom to manage themselves. Mehmed II even freed Vlad III (Dracula) from his prison to show his amnesty toward Wallachia and prevent Wallachia from becoming Hungarian territory.

However, Vlad III seemingly forgot that Mehmed II was the reason for his freedom. When Mehmed II sent couriers to Vlad III to collect his tribute, Vlad III killed the couriers. Vlad III began making war in the Balkans area, saying they should not have let the Ottomans camp so close to the Wallachian border. In 1462, Vlad III started dressing up as a Turk, and he knew the language well enough to pass as a native. Using this sneaky technique, he invaded camps and impaled over 23,000 Turkish soldiers.

Mehmed II, realizing the seriousness of Vlad III's actions and the repercussions of not stopping him, went to the Wallachian area to address the issue. Vlad III launched a surprise attack, and when Mehmed II saw all the Turkish bodies decorating Vlad III's city, he almost withdrew. However, Vlad III's mission against the Ottomans did not ring well with even his closest advisors. The men closest to him attacked him, forcing him to flee. The old governor of the area led an army to kill Wallachians. Mehmed II rewarded him by restoring him to his old position. Vlad III, meanwhile, fled to Hungary, and the Hungarians imprisoned him on charges of treason that may or may not have been accurate.

After taking over Bosnia in 1463, Mehmed II was faced with the Ottoman Venetian War that lasted sixteen years. Enmity was sown when an Albanian slave stole from his Ottoman master and ran away. The Ottomans used this as an excuse to attack the land where the slave was hiding bringing fighting to "the Aegean Sea and around the

coastal cities of Venice" (A'goston, 427).

The Ottoman Empire made advances on the Italian shores, conquering Otranto. However, after that, the Venetians began making various approaches. Mehmed II split his army to address the various fringes of the empire where armies were advancing. In 1465, a mere two years after the beginning of the war, Mehmed II had destroyed every advance on the Venetian's part, and he sent a sort of peace treaty to the Venetian Senate. However, the Venetians denied peace in favor of continuing the fight.

In 1466, the Venetians experienced a victory. The Venetians and Albanians worked together, making them stronger. Though Mehmed II fought against them, he did not succeed in suppressing the armies. That winter, the plague spread throughout the country. This slowly killed the Albanian leader and successfully ended the alliance between the Albanians and the Venetians. Mehmed II sent armies against Shkodra in 1474, but his armies did not succeed. Four years later, Mehmed II tried to personally lay siege to the city.

The city eventually became part of the Ottoman Empire, not through siege, but through a concession of the Treaty of Constantinople. The Treaty of Constantinople was signed in 1479. The Ottoman Empire was at the Venetian border. Because Venice did not want to lose everything, the country agreed to the treaty's terms. The lands were divided between the Ottomans and the Venetians, and the Venetians were forced to pay a large tribute annually.

When the ruler of Karaman died, a skirmish among possible successors began. The Ottomans picked a ruler and supported him on his war to the throne. When he won, he gave the land he had agreed upon giving

the Ottomans, however, he was not happy about fulfilling his end of the bargain.

Subsequently, Peter III Aaron, ruler of Moldavia, agreed to pay the Ottoman Empire an annual tribute if the Ottomans would protect their borders. This agreement worked well, until Peter III's descendant decided he did not want to pay the tribute. This ruler, Stephen, even supported a ruler that fit his bill to be the next Wallachian ruler. The Ottomans did not approve of his meddling with their affairs, and battling began.

The legends about the war with the Ottomans are not very clear. Some say that the Moldavians lured the Ottomans into a forest that they set on fire. Others say that the Moldavians succeeded by using guns to fire at them. Either way, the end was the same: the Ottomans won completely.

The Albanians wanted to stand up against the Ottoman expansion, and Mehmed II could not seem to defeat their leader. However, once the Albanian leader died, Mehmed II was able to take over the area by 1478.

Thereafter, Geonese Crimea was under attack, and they called out to the Ottomans for help. The Ottomans responded by invading the Crimean lands and completely taking over. The Ottomans drove out the enemies, but the Crimean land remains under their power. Fortunately for the Crimeans, they were allowed quite a bit of freedom under the Ottoman rule.

One of Mehmed II's last conquests was in Italy. His general entered

Italy but returned soon after, blaming a lack of supplies. Many feared the Ottomans intended to invade Rome, since they had taken over Constantinople less than thirty years before. The Pope in Rome called for help, and some French and Hungarian armies responded. Rome was besieged on May 1st, 1481; however, Mehmed II died two days later. The siege was left undefined.

Mehmed II's death remains under some suspicion. Different accounts tells different stories. Many accounts report him being poisoned, though who and how is under debate. Mehmed II was only forty-nine years old at the time of his death.

During the years of Mehmed II's rule, he was adamant about bringing his Islamic faith to every place he conquered. Once he conquered Constantinople and made it his capital, he ordered the Hagia Sophia under protection and began building another mosque on an Orthodox church's site. Mehmed II wanted the Greeks to return, and he provided them with free houses to entice them. The walls were repaired, and the city was re-fortified. Mehmed II's men even built a new palace.

Mehmed II built Muslim institutions, such as schools, and the population in Constantinople was over half Muslim. All Muslim boys were allowed to attend the schools at no charge. Because of all the effort he put into restoring the city, Constantinople became the biggest city in Europe after fifty years.

As for Mehmed II's personal life, he was reported as fluent in at least six languages. He was interested in Muslim theological problems and enjoyed joining in discussions regarding them. Muslim theology is rumored to have reached its acme during Mehmed II's reign.

When Mehmed II died, the Ottoman Empire contained "Constantinople, the Turkish kingdoms and territories of Asia Minor, Bosnia, the Kingdom of Serbia, and Albania." ("Mehmed The Conqueror" Wikipedia). He will not be forgotten, and he was the source of many literary and artistic masterpieces as well as the inspiration for the naming of various places.

Conclusion

Mehmed II, or Mehmed the Conqueror, is the last of the Ottoman emperors considered to have expanded and helped the Ottoman Empire reach its greatest point of power and holdings. However, the empire was not finished. It still had many more years of grandness before it. In the next chapter, the institutions the Ottomans put in place will be explored. The reason they were considered such a great empire and what they provided for their citizens will also be explained, along with a description of daily life.

Chapter 3: Ottoman Institutions

Knowing not only who was the leader and who conquered and achieved more land for the Ottoman Empire, but also knowing what it is that caused the Ottomans to make such a lasting effect on that part of the world is an important discovery. How did the Ottomans improve the land they conquered and added to their own? What was life like for the everyday person? Did they leave any influence on future generations?

Empire's Purpose

The empire was mainly focused on waging war and winning more land. In the beginning, the troops were mainly made up of Turkish soldiers who were paid in land grants. However, as the Ottoman Empire spread, their knowledge of war expanded as well as the availability of soldiers from different lands.

Some may question why a land that has just been conquered will turn around and fight for those who conquered them. The reason behind this is the protection the large Ottoman Empire offered. While the rulers of the smaller empires did not want to be swallowed up, the people of those small empires were willing to fight with the Ottomans to keep their land protected from any further threats. Sometimes, the Ottoman armies were even made up of prisoners who were forced to fight.

Responsibilities were divided among appointed leaders throughout the kingdom. The main purpose of the central leadership powers was to gather "the money and supplies necessary for the kapikulli forces" ("Ottoman Empire"). Money was only spent on bettering roads because

it made the moving of armies an easier process, not because it bettered life for the locals.

The Ottomans strove to be prepared in all possible battle situations, constantly training their troops to improve their fighting technique. Such strict battle regiment is one reason the Ottomans were able to fight so fiercely and experience such success during these first years.

Government Organization

The government is what would be considered a monarchy. A monarchy is a ruler who is appointed for the throne based on birth. This one ruler, (hence the "mono"), is not chosen by the people. The people have no say in the political nature of the empire.

In the Ottoman Empire, the ruler was known as the "Sultan". His word was not questioned, and the rule always passed on to a male relative- the oldest eligible relative. The sultan dispensed other duties as he saw fit, but he always had the final word. The grand vizier was an advisor for the sultan. He could study patterns in the empire and give the sultan advice, but he was in no position to make decisions.

Rulers, selected by the sultan, were scattered throughout the kingdom and given charge of small areas at a time. Sometimes, these positions were granted as favors to neighboring kingdoms or relatives, and they were always responsible for reporting back to the sultan.

A group called the qadis were in charge of following up on the criminal law and punishing those who crossed the line. They were judges who based their decisions on the Muslim law in place.

Empire's Religion

Because Islam was the empire's main religion, the institutions and laws established in the religion were practiced and enforced in all areas of the Ottoman Empire. All citizens, no matter their personal beliefs were forced to follow the rules of Islam in regards to morals.

However, there were still quite a few non-Muslim communities. A millet system was in place, which allowed small communities of non-Muslims to create their own laws and justice system. As long as they were not causing trouble for the Ottoman Empire as a whole, they could govern themselves ("Ottoman Empire" BBC). In 1454, the first Christian millet was established and given a fair amount of power by the ruling sultan. Other religious millets followed. Some of the millets were required to pay a sum of money to the empire, while others were seen as helping the greater good by instilling morals in the citizens and were exempted from paying taxes.

While the basic facts of the religion practiced in the Ottoman Empire are important, it is also important to show how belief in this religion affected the citizens of the empire. The devshirme "gathering" system greatly affected those under Ottoman rule. This system required the citizens of various millets (Muslims were exempted from the practice) to gift some of their children to the empire. Sometimes, this number was as high as twenty percent of the conquered Christian nations ("Ottoman Empire" BBC). These children were forced to become Muslim and then were treated as slaves. This servitude sometimes meant the children had positions serving nobles. However, most commonly, they were used as foot soldiers that could be easily sacrificed.

Even with these negative consequences, there were a few of the children gifted who were allowed to serve in government positions, including receiving the opportunity to possibly be the grand vizier to the sultan. The devshirme system allowed the Ottoman Empire to have an overly strong fighting force, as new recruits were constantly being added.

If the slaves could prove their loyalty, they might be given a high position. Unfortunately, while they may have an amount of wealth during their lives, the wealth and/ or status could not be inherited by their children. This method was established so that slaves obtained from the sacrifices would not grow to be more powerful than those born nobles.

Established in the fourteenth century, this system lasted until the seventeenth century, constantly supplying the sultan's army. The system was accepted by the Muslims as a way of keeping those non-Muslims under population control. Additionally, the thought that if they rebelled, their own children might be part of the army they fought was a partial deterrent to keeping everyone in their "rightful" place.

As the Muslim empire strode forth to conquer more ground, they would often find themselves fighting against countries of different religious beliefs. When the Muslims conquered Christian nations, they would change the churches into mosques. Christians would convert any mosques they conquered into churches, causing the battle to be religious as well as physical.

While the Muslims did take over religious worship places, they did not try to attack the Christians personally. Part of this was based on the large amount of Christians living in the empire. Starting a war personally against Christians would be difficult and cause some of the

empire's troops to turn against them. Maintaining harmony with the Christians would help the two groups coexist and extinguish any extra, unnecessary war. Additionally, the morals of the Christian church helped enforce the basic Muslim rules. For those reasons, no common citizens were forced to become Muslim. Those who had previously been persecuted, appreciated the different sultans' efforts toward peace. Because the Christians were allowed this religious freedom, they were supportive toward the sultan. Part of the reason behind their support is that many of the nations conquered came from under Roman Catholic rule, which had been a more suppressive ruler.

Policy of Fratricide

In the fifteenth century, the policy of fratricide was introduced. This policy was created to protect the throne of the sultan. When a sultan ascended to his throne, his brothers would be locked up. This was of course, to protect the sultan's position. However, the policy went a step further. Once the sitting sultan had a son, an heir, the sultan's brothers and nephews were all killed. Even though the law may have been created with a positive goal, it would make life as a relation to the Sultan very difficult. Later on, the policy was changed a bit so that the brothers would only be imprisoned instead of murdered. This was beneficial as sometimes the son who should have been the heir died. In this way, brothers were able to succeed brothers.

Palace Life

The palace of the sultans was located Istanbul and was called the Topkapi Palace. Each sultan lived in incredible comfort and luxury. Once example of this is the fact that sultans would wear their garments a mere day before discarding them and never using them again. Many Muslim artifacts were kept in the museum as a reminder of where they came from. Items such as a casting of Muhammad's feet were kept in the palace to demonstrate that the Ottomans were

following the will of Allah.

The Imperial Harem was a large part of the palace that held the many wives and concubines of the Sultan. "It was ruled by the Valide Sultan (also known as the Bas Kadin, or 'Chief Lady')" ("State Organisation of the Ottoman Empire"). This woman, the Sultan's mother, had a surprising amount of power. Her actions could serve to either promote the ruling Sultan or demote him in the eyes of the kingdom. Some of the more powerful women were even involved in the political aspects of the empire.

There was ranking in the harem, based on status of marriage or concubine and the sultan's personal favorites. The mother of the sultan's first-born son was placed right below the sultan's mother in terms of power. Because her son would most likely become sultan, she would probably be the Valide Sultan one day. Underneath her would come the other official wives of the sultan, varying depending on the sultan and who he preferred. The concubines were then ranked in favorability, based on how often the sultan called for them. There could be up to a thousand concubines of the sultan, some not seeing him for years at a time. Many of these women came from around the world and could be gifts from neighboring kingdoms to keep the peace. Underneath the concubines were concubines of other court officials who lived in the palace. Last of all came the young, unmarried women. These could be daughters of the sultan or women who were attending the Harem School.

Men referred to as eunuchs served in the harem. These eunuchs were not considered to be fully men as they were usually slaves or prisoners who had been castrated. Because no man was allowed to see another man's harem, this specific thought process that eunuchs were not men allowed them to serve the women without temptation of doing something improprietous.

The next sultan was almost always chosen from among the sitting sultan's sons(at least in the early years of the empire). However, the oldest son was not always the chosen. The Ottoman Empire was more worried about proper education and training than birth order. However, when a younger son was chosen, this would often be a reason for strife within the empire and was usually avoided.

The palace schools were a training ground for the potential sultans. Those were intelligent were able to pass forward for further training, while those incapable of the tasks a sultan would need to complete would be eliminated from the selection process. However, these schools were open to more than just the sultan's children.

There were two parts to the palace school: the Madrasa, for Muslim families, and the Enderun, for non-Muslim students or students with a non-Muslim background. Because the schools were supported by the Ottoman government, poorer families could send their children and have them educated at a high level even if the family could not afford the cost. This was life changing for the citizens as those with poor families could still rise to take a noble position. This school did exclude orphans, married children, Jews, and Russians ("State Organisation of the Ottoman Empire").

The purpose of the school was to train the upcoming generation in favor of the Ottoman Sultan. Those who attended were favored with government positions as long as they demonstrated their constant loyalty. The graduates were discouraged from forming relationships with those in lower social groups. The normal time a student spent in the school was seven years before they graduated and were ready to serve the kingdom. The school sought only to better the kingdom's standing and education of its government officials.

The sultan was constantly looking out for his safety, moving often so that his enemies could not predict where he would be. Those who rose in power and favor under the sultan would be placed in ruling positions far away. Those who did not rise in favor would often placed under lock and key to protect the sultan's life.

Even though the sultan lived in plush comfort, he could not afford to relax often as many attempts were always made either to kill the sultan or to attack his kingdom. However, those who had relatives in the harem were close to power and could sometimes get favors for their children or relations. The palace life was one reeking of extravagance.

Life for the Common People

The Ottoman Empire gave a relatively large amount of freedom toward the common people. As long as a group was not causing problems, it would usually be left to its own devices. The fact that religious millets were allowed to maintain law and order in different areas of the country meant that people were not forced to assimilate with the Muslim religion and culture. Many countries preferred being under the Ottoman reign as other reigns were a lot more dictatorial.

Many of the poorer communities engaged in farming. However, the income was not large and was almost completely consumed to care for the farmer and his family. Additionally, these poor farmers had to pay high taxes on the crops they produced. In the city, someone was defined by the labor they did. If they had a higher job, they were respected more. However, the people's ability to receive a high paying job relied heavily on their status at birth.

As for entertainment, many in the country did not have money to

support a habit of attending any sort of social club. However, many cities and towns had popular meeting spots where men could meet, have a meal, or simply talk about what was going on around the country. This type of social behavior was common among the people and was the main type of entertainment in their free time.

Those on the outskirts of the empire did not always enjoy safety. They might be caught between a battle of the Sultan's soldiers and those from a neighboring empire. Additionally, because of the multiple cultures and language, travel within the kingdom could be dangerous. While a citizen might live in his village in one culture, if he traveled fifty miles, he might not be able to understand what anyone said or why the culture acted the way it did. This caused people, unless they were rich nobles, to normally stay within their community.

Because of the fear that chased these people's lives, the sultan had less a chance of a rebellion. His people could not all speak the same language; they did not all have the same customs. The likelihood that one group of Turks would unite with their Arab neighbors to overthrow the sultan was low.

The time period in which the Ottoman Empire thrived was a dangerous time for the people as many medicines were not fully developed. Diseases that doctors would nowadays stop quickly could be life-threatening. Epidemics could pass through a town, brought on one person, and kill many. People constantly lived in fear of such epidemics; if they ever heard word that one was coming, and they would hide in their houses, hoping to keep the epidemic out. One way the people strode to fight the epidemics was by keeping clean in the baths, which were in the center of the city. However, because they did not know about germs and what was causing the diseases, the people were mostly in the dark about how to protect themselves.

Artistic Influence

The art at the very beginning of the Ottoman Empire reflects the Byzantine art structure. However, later on, as the Ottomans began making advances and establishing their empire, their art took a distinctly different path. The conquest and construction of the Hagia Sophia inspired many Ottoman architects. Mehmed II commissioned the construction of two palaces and multiple institutions around his kingdom. His designs were based on multiple cultures including Turkish, Islamic, and Byzantine. Because Mehmed II was also interested in European art, he had artists come visit him and give him inspiration. In this way, the Ottoman art style began as a mix of the different cultures that had been united under the Sultan's rule.

The reign of Suleyman I, which will be discussed later on, was a particularly high point for Ottoman art. Sinan built many temples and mosques; his designs were unique and striking, causing a period of magnificent artistic achievements.

Many of the noble or royal class would commission artists to build or decorate buildings that caused the empire to be splattered with completely new designs and ideas. There were still many old buildings left to represent the times from before, but many new styles were coming into popularity during the sixteenth century.

The styles seen in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries were dominated by the use of domes, which made a space seem bigger. The Ottoman architecture experimented with constructing ways to let in maximum amounts of light or ways to make a room perpetually more mysterious and dark. Columns were used liberally throughout the designs. These advances in architecture allowed the Ottomans to create mosques that were beautiful and breath-taking, instead of simply a place to worship.

Putting architecture aside, the Ottoman Empire also had an influence in the area of paintings and art on canvas. During Mehmed II's rule, artists were brought into the kingdom, and the idea of painting miniatures was first developed. Later on, artists were given places to live in the royal palace. The miniatures reached their peak point in the sixteenth century, and as the empire moved into the seventeenth century, the miniatures began to be affected by European art.

Other than painting important leaders, mosques and landscapes tended to be the focus of paintings. As painting on canvas became more popular, canvas paintings were used as wall decorations instead of painted tiles, which had previously been popular.

The Imperial Naval Engineering School was opened in 1795 and began training painters. Those students who showed extreme talent might be sent to Europe to have even more extensive art training. Later on, the paintings produced in the Ottoman Empire began to illustrate impressionism, which later became a popular art form.

During this time, the Ottoman Empire began demonstrating the importance of not only conquering land, as was its primary goal, but also enjoying life and beauty.

Last of all comes Turkish literature. Some Turkish literature that was produced during the early days of Anatolia can still be found; however, the arts were not greatly celebrated at that point. Even though languages, cultures, and living situations changed throughout the development of the Ottoman Empire, it is still well-known for producing literature.

The oldest type of literature produced in the Ottoman Empire was a type known as a heroic epic. This type of story exaggerated the details of man who fought to save the kingdom. A story known as "The Book of My Grandfather Korkut" is one example of the heroic epic. This story is a great example because it lasted so long and was written so early. Many of these epics were circulated by mouth for hundreds of years before they were finally written down. This is why, if there are multiple versions, they may be so different. Stories told by mouth always tend to change a bit with each telling. Different writers may have heard different versions. The text of this example is mainly made up of prose, with a few speeches in verse.

These writings could be turned into songs, songs which usually only represented a part of the story. Simple instruments would be used to sing parts of stories, especially in court entertainment situations. Naili was the first poet who included verses specifically created to sing in his works.

In the 13th century, mystical poetry became a large part of the Ottoman literature framework. Asik Pasa was a well-known poet who explored more serious themes, dealing with philosophical or moral problems. Yunus Emre was another poet who was well-known during the 13th century. He wrote poetry more for the common people, addressing their interests and problems. Later on, a poet created what is known as Sufi verse. This poetry was a combination of Persian and Turkish in its language.

Ottoman poetry generally consisted of couplets and sometimes used monorhyme, which is rhyme created by repetition of the same word. Instead of penning couplets upon couplets, the Ottoman poetry drifted away from epic stories and toward shorter poems that usually consisted of five to ten couplets (Feldman).

If a poem was mainly narrative, the mesnevi form would be used. This form contained couplets and supported didactic works. Many original stories were told through this format rather than epic legends that were restated in various literary formats. During the seventeenth century, this literary form lost popularity. However, some of the most well-known Ottoman literature stills falls into this category. "Beauty and Love" and "The Sufferers" are some of the best Ottoman literary works that were completed at the end of the empire's reign, and both were done in the mesnevi form.

Poetry before the sixteenth century was alive but was not thriving. It was not until the Ottoman Empire was well established that past times such as these became more popular. Nobles had personal poets. The poets would be commissioned to either write about the noble or to create a poem-story to entertain the noble. In this way, many poems were created but did not gain popularity because they were virtually unknown.

Throughout this time, the poetry represented the combination of cultures seen in the Ottoman Empire- Turkish, Persian, and Arabic. Some poems solely represented one culture and language, while others sought to represent them all.

Classical music was especially popular during this time, and even Sultans would compose and practice music. The music arose from the mix of cultures within the Ottoman Empire and was composed of a meter called a usul.

Instruments used during this time also demonstrated the mixed culture of the Ottoman Empire. Anatolian instruments such as the saz, baglama, and kemence were used. All of these instruments were stringed and appeared similar to a modern day guitar, except containing fewer strings. The Middle East influenced the Ottomans to

use instruments such as the tanbur, kanun, ney, and ud. The ud and tanbur also resembled guitars, while the kanun was more like a harp. Last of all, the ney was similar to our modern day flute. Western instruments influenced the Ottomans later on by introducing the violin and the piano, which are popular today.

While classical music was popular among nobility and Sultans, a version of folk music became just as popular among the citizens of the Ottoman Empire. Depending on the region and language, the folk music differed to fit the culture. Four types of folk music stand out based on their popularity: Turkish, belly dance, Roma music, and Janissary music.

As for entertainment, the nobles enjoyed a type of theater known as shadow play. A single puppet master controlled and voiced all characters in the performance, and the performance was supported by tambourine music.

The Ottoman Empire, once passed through the most difficult of beginnings, was a thriving ground for artistic expression. The creativity and experimentation with new styles can be seen in how new ways of creating or building things emerged from the time period. The architecture from the Ottoman period is memorable and distinctive.

Cuisine

The cuisine considered Ottoman in nature was really a mixture of popular foods from the different groups within Ottoman reign. The Imperial Palace chefs began experimenting for a way to combine ingredients in a new way, taking ideas from the menagerie of cultures combined under the empire.

Before the sultan could try a dish, his imperial food taster would try the food. He was looking both for poison or anything else that could be dangerous and for taste. The dishes passed through his tasting then through the sultan's. If a dish was satisfactory, it might be shared with the people. These creations were spread to the common people through different events, one example being the Ramadan event, and this type of cuisine rose in popularity. Dishes that are now popular in the regions where the Ottoman Empire once was are a result of these palace chefs experimenting.

Three dishes were especially popular in the palace during this time. The first is roasted pigeon. Secondly, kalye (a fruit or vegetable cooked with oil and tomato sauce) was served. Last of all, stuffed melon was popular. These palace dishes were not as popular among the people.

Ottoman food was characterized through the serving of pita bread with almost every meal. This could be eaten by a commoner or noble alike. Additionally, these dishes were also popular throughout the Ottoman Empire: yogurt, doner, ayran, feta cheese, baklava, moussaka, borek, kofte, meze, dolma, sarma, rice pilaf, coffee, sujuk, and more.

Technology

During the fifteenth century, the sitting Sultan hungered for more knowledge. Because of his reign, books and manuscripts were gathered and translations were made, expanding libraries like never before. One specific book sought after was Ptolemy's geography book.

In 1577, Taqi al-Din built an observatory in Istanbul. He studied the way the sun and the moon moved. However, after only three years, his observatory was destroyed by a clerical faction who did not think his research was important.

Serafeddin Sabuncuoglu "was the author of the first surgical atlas and the last major medical encyclopedia from the Islamic world." ("Ottoman Empire" Wikipedia). During the seventeenth century, the idea of a female surgeon was introduced through drawings in medical books. Additionally, in the early eighteenth century, the idea of a watch that told the minutes was first illustrated and experimented with in the Ottoman Empire.

While the Ottoman Empire may not have started off making scientific discoveries or have been one of the leading scientific states, the sultans certainly began pushing their people to have interest in the matter starting in the sixteenth century. The empire was able to make a few discoveries and design a few ideas; however, the development of science and technology was not the kingdom's main focus.

Sports

Sports were a popular pastime as some noblemen did not need to labor for money. Being amply supplied and needing a way to pass the time, these men formed clubs for different sports. The most popular sports in the empire were wrestling, hunting, archery, horseback riding, swimming, javelin throwing, and arm wrestling. Some of these sports such as wrestling would not have gentleman participants; however, gentlemen would bet on the winner. Clubs for football or hunting were more popular among the higher classes. Some popular clubs were created for a menagerie of sports. These clubs did not become popular until the early 20th century, directly before the decline of the Ottoman Empire.

Conclusion

The culture of the Ottoman Empire is distinct in its mixture of various backgrounds. Many empires simply force once ethnicity, language, and religion on all, while the Ottoman Empire allowed each group to thrive individually. This caused diversity in areas such as artistic expression or sports. It also allowed one ethnicity to learn from another.

Daily life was not easy for those in the working class, and the contrast between the rich and the poor was surprising. However, no matter the class, one similarity resounded loudly. The people all yearned for freedom and the ability to enjoy life, however that might have been for them.

The exact effect that the Ottoman Empire had after it disintegrated will be discussed later. The aspects of the culture which lasted and what parts died alongside the empire will be exposed. Some of its ideas, art, and influence still live on, even after the empire has been divided. That effect shows just how strong an influence the Ottoman Empire had over its members and the surrounding areas.

Chapter 4: The Peak of the Ottoman Empire

The peak of the Ottoman Empire is also known as the Golden Age. The period lasted approximately 90 years, starting after Mehmed II's death in 1481. The Golden Age is said to have ended in 1566 after three Golden Age emperors: Bayezid II, Selim I, and Suleyman I (also known as Suleyman the Magnificent).

This time period is known as the Golden Age because it was a time of relative peace throughout the Ottoman Empire. The kingdom was quite large by this point, extending into Europe, Asia, and Africa. New organizations were formed to support economical, political, and educational training and improvement.

Bayezid II

Bayezid II was the son of Mehmed II and the eighth emperor of the Ottoman Empire. During the beginning of his reign, Bayezid II experienced tension with his brother, Cem. Cem looked for military to support his run for sultan. After being defeated by his brother, Cem appealed to the pope for help. The pope tried to start a crusade with Cem the leader; however, the crusade failed badly. Cem was put in jail, and Bayezid II paid the pope and the knights to keep him there.

Bayezid II strove to be as incorrupt as possible, keeping the politics running smoothly. His policies earned him the title of being just or fair throughout his reign as sultan. Problems that had run rampant during Mehmed II's reign were resolved, building a strong foundation for future sultans. Bayezid II declared war on Morea, lands of Venetia, seeking to expand his ability to have a navy. By 1501, the whole Peloponnese was under Bayezid II's control.

Those in Persian authority backed rebellions in various parts of the Ottoman Empire in an attempt to disrupt Bayezid II's leadership. Battle was so spread out that Bayezid II sent different groups to squelch the various rebellions. His grand vizier was killed in one battle against the rebels.

During Bayezid II's reign, he also endeavored to consolidate the territory. This meant that he was taking land that was not completely under Ottoman rule and making it a part of the kingdom. He brought the territories under direct control. He strengthened his land route to Crimea by taking direct control of two forts along the way.

In 1492, the Spanish Inquisition forced all Jews and Muslims to leave what had been their home. Bayezid II ordered the Ottoman navy to evacuate those trying to leave. His purpose in doing so was to keep the people safe. In a mass evacuation such as Spain was instrumenting, many could be killed while seeking safety. Bayezid II commanded that all welcome the refugees now flooding into the Ottoman Empire. He granted the refugees citizenship in his empire and the right to live within its borders. He encouraged those who welcomed the refugees. Bayezid II saw that if he protected the refugees while Spain expelled them, they would be all the more grateful to him and his empire, supporting its cause and remaining loyal to the empire. Bayezid II even went so far as to threaten "with death all those who treated the Jews harshly or refused them admission into the empire" ("Bayezid II" Wikipedia).

Moses Capsali supported the refugees and encouraged Bayezid II to welcome them. Capsali even forced the rich to pay extra taxes as a means to have money to help the Jews escape.

The Jews who now occupied the kingdom more than paid it back for its kindness in their time of need. They were more than willing to contribute ideas, knowledge, and ability to better the kingdom. The Jews invented the first printing press in Constantinople in 1493. Many scholars and writers of the time period believe that the Jews flourished immensely under Ottoman rule ("Bayezid II" Wikipedia).

In 1499, the Ottomans began fighting with the Venetians. The war took place mainly in the Balkans, and this war is what finally allowed the Ottomans to take control of Morea, the land Bayezid II had wanted so long ago.

Additionally, Bayezid II was struggling against Egypt and Syria to clarify the boundaries between them. Because he was focused on other problems in the kingdom, Bayezid II did not commit his full force to the struggle, and the struggle ended in an undefined place. Neither side won.

In 1509, Constantinople was hit by an earthquake. The earthquake had a magnitude of 7.2 ("1509 Constantinople Earthquake"). Forty-five days of aftershocks along with a tsunami followed the earthquake. Many houses and mosques fell or were completely destroyed. Fortunately, the religious masterpiece Hagia Sophia survived almost completely unharmed. The numbers of deaths is difficult to know exactly. However, it was somewhere between 1,000 and 13,000 deaths. Those left alive could not return to their homes during the days of aftershocks as they waited for everything to settle. This earthquake, hitting the Ottoman Empire's stronghold, caused a lot of damage and destroyed the capital.

Between the time of this earthquake and the time when Bayezid II's

rule ended, his sons fought to be his successor. Bayezid II expressed some fear in regards to one of his sons and refused to be near him. The two sons were Selim and Ahmet. Bayezid II could not spend time settling the disagreement between the two of them as he had his own problems to face.

A group of Safavids, a breakoff of Islam, wanted Persia and its ruler to be ruling over them. They began gathering forces by spreading their doctrine throughout a part of the Asian Ottoman land. As the group continued gathering followers, it gained more power. In 1511, the group rose up against Ottoman rule.

Meanwhile, one of his sons, Selim, "went to Crimea in 1511, secured aid there from the Tatar khan, and then crossed the Danube into the Balkans" (Parry). While Selim was receiving aid, the Safavids were defeated. Ahmet, also spelled Ahmed, had helped in that Ottoman victory, and he assumed he would take his father's crown. However, the Janissaries did not support him, and Ahmet turned back to gather support from the people throughout Anatolia. Bayezid II feared that Ahmet was going to go to the Persian ruler for support. Acting quickly, Bayezid II recalled Selim from Crimea and made him ruler, giving up his throne with Selim specifically in place. After this abdication, Bayezid II died one month later.

Bayezid II was simply a man who worked toward helping his people. He spent much of the empire's money on building new mosques, schools, bridges, and hospitals. Bayezid II's reign is actually a very popular one for media nowadays. He is depicted in the movie Fetih 1453 and a book called *The Sultan's Helmsman*. It is also said that his struggle with his son Selim is the foundation for the game *Assassin's Creed: Revelations.*

Though Bayezid II always preferred peace, he was not afraid to fight if it was necessary to protect his kingdom. Because he was so peaceful, the Janissaries preferred his son Selim to rule as Selim was more militarily active. The Janissaries' support is one of the main reasons that Selim was the son who became the successor. In the end, this peaceful kingdom was passed on to his son, and he Ottoman's Golden Age continued.

Selim I

Bayezid II's son, Selim I, became the ninth ruler of the Ottoman Empire. Born in 1470, Selim I is described as being "a tall and a strong man. He was a brave soldier and naturally tough. He was very well educated. Selim was very much interested in science and theology" ("Ottoman: Sultans- Selim I"). Perhaps it was based on this strong and tough demure that he was nicknamed Yavuz, which is generally translated to mean "the Grim."

Before Selim I was the Ottoman Sultan, he was the Governor of Tribizon. He was a very successful ruler, as he learned the empire's regulations and military techniques. His time as governor was spent improving relationships with neighboring lands. When those living in Georgia began to rebel against the Ottoman propogandas, Selim the governor struck back and showed them where their place was. Once he invaded, the residents all converted to Islam.

Because Selim I came to the throne amid such struggle, once upon the throne, he immediately executed all other eligible heirs, so as to protect his claim. Only his son, which he considered most able to rule, Suleyman, remained.

Selim I then addressed the Safavid dynasty in Iran. They were

selecting a sect of Islam to follow, completely undermining the sect of Islam practiced by the Ottoman emperor. As a result, the Iranians were rebelling in Anatolia. While Selim I tried a more placid method of letter-writing to solve their differences, it was clear that would not be the answer. The group could only be put down through force.

Selim I marched to their stronghold and attacked. Even though the Safavid soldiers were well prepared, the Ottomans simply had a larger army who were trained to use muskets. The Ottomans were victorious, and Selim I made his victory clear by entering their city. This battle is momentous as it demonstrates the benefit of having weapons such as muskets and how quickly they can help decide who is more powerful.

The other important event during Selim I's reign was the Ottoman-Mamluk War. Through a few battles, Selim I was able to defeat the Egyptians' Mamluk Sultanate. Though this victory, the Ottomans annexed all of the territory that had been under that leader, including Syria, Palestine, the Arabian Peninsula, and Egypt. Mecca and Medina, the Muslim holy cities, were finally under Ottoman power in 1517. When the people wanted to give him a name, Selim the first would not accept the Ruler of Two Holy Shrines. He instead decided on the Servant of Two Holy Shrines.

Selim I forced the last caliph in line for rule in Egypt to hand over his title and the emblems that demonstrated his title. This mantle and sword of Muhammad were then put on display in Topkapi Palace Museum. Selim I was also given the keys to the city of Mecca. This act of submission signaled that Selim I was now the leader of the Muslim world.

Selim I began working on ways to strengthen the Ottoman navy.

However, he did not have the opportunity to run another campaign, because Selim I became overwhelmingly sick. He died at the age of fifty in the ninth year of his reign. There is a little disagreement about the exact cause of his death. Officials claim sirpence as the reason for his death. Sirpence is an illness that starts as a blister and spreads into an ulcer, allowing bacteria to enter the body. The disease can also be caught through bacteria orally. Some claim this disease could have been contracted from Selim I's long horseback rides while he was campaigning. However, historians say that he could have died of cancer or even been poisoned by his physician. Last of all, another theory is that there was a plague in the kingdom at that time (proved by other accounts during that time period), and Selim I could have contracted this plague. Either way, Selim I's death was premature and unexpected. Fortunately, the succession of his son was more direct than Selim I's own ascension had been.

Overall, because of Selim I's successful campaigns, he expanded the Ottoman territory greatly. When Selim I started the campaign into the Serbian and Egyptian area, the Ottoman land was 341,100 square miles. When the campaign was over, the Ottoman Empire contained 576,900 square miles of territory, a 70% increase (A'goston, 511). This success also brought in additional revenue for the kingdom as the Egyptian and Serbian lands were fruitful in production and paid taxes.

While Selim I enjoyed working with the military and conquering other lands, he was also appreciative of the finer parts of life. He appreciated art, fencing, wrestling, archery, and horseback riding. However, even as the Sultan of the incredibly large Ottoman Empire, Selim I still ate off wooden plates with usually one or two foods served instead of a large banquet. Selim I was modest about the immense wealth he owned ("Ottoman: Sultans- Selim I"). Additionally, Selim I constantly filled the treasury instead of taking from it for his own pleasure. However, he was generous to his army and rewarded

the Janissaries bountifully for their hard work. Selim I is also known for inventing the idea of the Taylesanh Selimi turban- that which had a small end of cloth hanging down.

Selim I became the respected ruler he was because of his honest and hardworking inclination. However, he did have a bit of a temper and was not afraid to execute those not performing well in their positions. "A popular Ottoman curse was 'may you be a vizier of Selim's,' as a reference to the number of viziers he had executed" ("Selim I" Wikipedia). Perhaps this curse is related to why he was nicknamed the Grim. However, Selim I met out punishments and rewards according to what one deserved. If a person worked hard, he would reward him well. If a person was simply looking for power or a great name and did not fulfill his position, he would be punished. Selim I's rule, while short, was successful.

Suleyman I

Suleyman I, also spelled Suleiman, was the tenth ruler of the Ottoman Empire and the last ruler of the Ottoman Golden Age. His name is taken from Solomon of the Bible days, but he was known as Suleyman the Magnificent throughout his kingdom His reign was the longest among Ottoman emperors as he ruled from 1520 to 1566. The wealth and grandeur experienced by the empire during Suleyman I's time as emperor was never surpassed later on in the kingdom. His rule really was the pinnacle of Ottoman greatness.

Only twenty-five when his father died, Suleyman I had been prepared for his place as emperor. As a child, he was sent to the best schools where he studied the customary subjects along with theology and war tactics. At fifteen, Suleyman I felt he was ready to be a governor, and he begged to be allowed the honor. He was sent various places, serving in Sarki, Karahisar, Bolu, and Kefe. His father ascended the

throne when Suleyman I was seventeen years old. He was called to Istanbul to help his father who was struggling against his brother, Ahmed, for the throne. When Selim I died in 1520, Suleyman I succeeded his father with no trouble. Everyone trusted this serious, confident man.

When Suleyman I ascended to the role of sultan, he changed the empire's focus. Instead of focusing on fighting the Safavid Muslims as his father had been doing, Suleyman I focused on the empire's Christian enemies. The main reason for Suleyman I's making this choice was based on how exhausting the warfare against Safavids was for the Ottoman army. He did not see how the empire could profitably maintain the policy his father had instilled without completely wearing out the army. Besides this, some of the soldiers were beginning to desert or help the enemy. In order to keep his army loyal and his kingdom strong, Suleyman I called off the war on Safavids.

Soon after recalling the army from the eastern border, Suleyman I put them to use by invading Belgrade in 1521. Suleyman I knew that this fortress was the stronghold of the Hungarians, and he knew that the Hungarians were the only force blocking him from conquering even more of Europe. Seeing that, Suleyman I began attacking Belgrade. Belgrade only had a small army protecting it, and Hungary did not send help, meaning that the city folded quickly. The city that the Ottomans had been trying to capture since Murad II's rule was now theirs.

Instead of working toward Hungary and Austria for more land, Suleyman I used his navy to capture the island of Rhodes. He evicted the knights of St. John and established his strength as Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Because he experienced such victory in his early years, other kingdoms learned to respect him quickly.

One of Suleyman I's most known victories was experienced in the Battle of the Mohacs. Charles V, France's king, asked for help from the Ottomans in the territory he had just captured. For that reason, Suleyman I killed Louis II, king of Hungary, when he defeated them. The Hapsburgs tried to claim the throne based on a marriage connection, but Suleyman I did not want to support that claim. The Austrians (Hapsburgs) slowly marched through Hungary until they took possession of it. That got Suleyman I's attention, and he retook possession of Hungary in 1529. Suleyman I experienced his first defeat when he laid siege on Vienna. The Austrian army was strong and beat Suleyman I back. Suleyman I tried a second time to defeat the Hapsburgs but also failed. This became the start of the Ottoman-Hapsburg rivalry that lasted hundreds of years.

The rivalry continued, and in 1541, the Hapsburgs tried to capture Ottoman territory Buda, which lay in Hungary. However, the result of this was that the Hungarians were beaten back, and they lost a few of their other forts. The Hapsburgs were also forced to sign a five-year treaty with Suleyman I based on his victories. The Hapsburg rulers were forced give up their claim on Hungary and pay a yearly amount to Suleyman I. After having subdued these Austrian leaders, Suleyman I assured that the Ottoman Empire was in a strong position for years to come.

Having defeated these enemies and established his place as Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Suleyman I turned his attention back to the ever-present Safavid problem. After having a trusted governor killed by the Safavids and having another governor swear allegiance to the Safavids, Suleyman I knew he needed to take action before the Safavids gained any more power. Suleyman I was able to take Bitlis and Tabriz with little to no resistance. The Shah in Persia began sacrificing territory rather than face battle as Suleyman I pushed

forward into the Safavid land.

In 1535, Suleyman I and his grand vizier, Ibrahim, entered Baghdad, the city was surrendered to their army. When Suleyman I restored the grave of Sunni imam Abu Hanifa, his strength of his claim on the Persian throne was supported even further. In 1548, Suleyman I drove another campaign further into the land to defeat the Shah at last. However, as the Shah retreated, he used a scorched earth technique, burning everything before the Ottomans could reach it. Deep into the territory with no supplies and harsh winter, Suleyman I retreated.

In 1553, Suleyman I made a final attempt to capture the Shah. He made a few preliminary captures and destroyed parts of the Persian land. The Shah's army continued to avoid the Ottomans instead of having a direct confrontation in battle. In 1554, the two parties signed a treaty. This treaty required that neither party continue the battle against the other and divided out the land between the two.

Moreover, Suleyman I was also active in the Indian Ocean. The Ottomans capture Yemen in 1538, but Yemen was not their main concern. Suleyman I was mainly focused on attacking the Portuguese so that the trade routes for the Ottoman Empire to India would be open. In their first battle against the Portuguese in 1538, the Ottomans did not succeed. Running back to their base in Yemen, they fortified the city and prepared for another attack. Aden, the ruler of Yemen, called to the Portuguese for help, and the Portuguese intervened, taking complete control of Yemen. The Portuguese remained in control for the next ten years.

Because of Suleyman I's control over the Red Sea, he was able to negotiate opening some trade with India and Southeast Asia. Aceh, a

land in modern-day Indonesia, called for Suleyman I's help against the Portuguese in 1564. Suleyman I responded and was able to help the empire find success.

European nations found new trade routes to India and began avoiding the Ottoman-controlled trade routes all together. Meanwhile, the Portuguese and Ottomans struggled over the Cape of Good Hope and who would be in control.

Morea, the land that Selim I had tried to hard to fight and capture, was lost to the Hapsburgs, and this concerned Suleyman I, who considered the possibility that the Austrians would challenge the Ottoman authority. As the Hapsburgs continued to make progress in taking little cities and eating away at the border of the Ottoman Empire, Suleyman I made an alliance with Francis I of France to stop the Austrians. In 1538, the Ottomans won the Battle of Preveza, giving them peace on the eastern Mediterranean coast for thirty-three years.

In the next few years, the Ottomans experienced victories in northern Africa, helping the Ottomans gain complete control of the Mediterranean Sea. The alliance between France and the Ottomans was renewed, and Suleyman I continued to support Francis I in his tirade against the Austrians. In 1544, Francis I made peace with the Austrians, temporarily ending the French treaty with the Ottomans.

In 1565, the Ottomans invaded Malta with a siege that lasted almost four months. However, when the Ottomans seemed to be beating back the Maltese and destroying their towns, the Spanish entered the battle to help the Maltese. Ten thousand Ottoman troops were killed as a result, and the Maltese experienced a victory ("Suleiman the Magnificent").

On a personal note, Suleyman I had two wives whore bore four sons that survived into the 1550s. The wives were anxious about the choosing of the next sultan as they knew that their own sons would be killed if they were not the chosen sultan. Mustafa, one of Suleyman I's sons, was supported by other rulers in nearby lands to be the best choice for the succeeding sultan.

During this time, "Suleyman ordered the strangling of grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha, a faithful companion from childhood, skilled commander, and diplomat. Ottoman chroniclers claim that Suleyman got rid of his trusted statesman because the latter abused his power" (A'goston, 544). Other historians suggest that Suleyman I did this because Ibrahim was not supportive of the choice to put Mustafa on the Ottoman throne.

While Suleyman I was away, rumors were spread that Mustafa wanted to take over his throne early. Suleyman I set up a time to meet with his son and find out the truth behind the rumors. Mustafa did not want to appear, knowing he had done nothing wrong but afraid of what his father might do anyway. However, after thinking the matter over, Mustafa was confident that the army would protect him, and he appeared before his father. When he entered his father's tent, he was attacked and strangled with a bowstring by his father's eunuchs ("Suleiman the Magnificent").

At this point, only two sons of Suleyman I were left: Selim and Bayezid. Suleyman I sent them to far reaches of the kingdom in command of small areas so that Suleyman I would be safe from any premature moves on their part. The two brothers began to fight over who would become the next sultan. Selim defeated his brother and forced him to flee. For payment, Bayezid and his sons were strangled

to death by an executioner, so that Selim's ascent to the throne would be clear and easy.

On the brink of another successful expedition, Suleyman I died in 1566. His death was kept secret for a time until the army could retreat and properly throne Selim II. Suleyman's heart and organs were buried in Hungary, and his body was buried in Istanbul.

Suleyman I was a gracious ruler to his people, but he had no mercy for those who threatened his throne. However, Suleyman I's softer side is also seen in a few of his actions. When he saw such a high tax coming from Egypt, he investigated and found that the governor was mistreating the people. Suleyman I immediately replaced the governor.

Suleyman I also took an interest in the arts, part of what helped create the Golden Age for the Ottoman Empire. Many art societies or clubs were created for rising talent to practice their skill. In fact, Suleyman I even wrote his own poetry. Many artists served in the court including: "painters, book binders, furriers, jewellers, and goldsmiths" (Suleiman the Magnificent").

Here is a famous verse written by Suleyman I:

> "The people think of wealth and power as the greatest fate,
>
> But in this world, a spell of health is the best state.
>
> What men call sovereignty is a worldly strife and constant war;
>
> Worship of God is the highest throne, the happiest of all estates." ("Suleiman the Magnificent").

Suleyman I's personality can be seen in his view of the throne. He did not see it as something to enjoy, but a large and difficult responsibility, much preferring good health to power and wealth. Suleyman I sponsored many architectural achievements throughout his kingdom, mostly focusing on building religious sites but also focusing on improving the roads and bridges for travel. Additionally, Suleyman I restored the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the walls of the city of Jerusalem.

Another name that Suleyman I was called is Kanuni- Lawgiver. He was just and did not see himself as exempt from the laws. He made laws, and his people admired him. Suleyman I also saw education as an important tool to build a powerful empire. He formed schools that were in conjunction with mosques and allowed Muslim boys to receive free education.

When Suleyman I died, the Ottoman Empire was at its acme. Many rulers of European countries where Suleyman I had not yet reached had feared that he would come after them as soon as he finished dominating the Hungarian/ Austrian area. Suleyman I was so well-known that years later when Shakespeare was writing his plays, he quoted Suleyman I.

However, Suleyman I is renown for more than simply his military accomplishments. Suleyman I was known to look after the poorest and build up the agricultural wealth of the empire. The advancements and achievements seen in the arts, architecture, philosophy, and literature cause this time in the Ottoman Empire's history to be unforgettable.

Conclusion

The peak in the Ottoman Empire lasted throughout these three rulers'

lives: Bayezid II, Selim I, and Suleyman I. However, the real pinnacle was during Suleyman I's reign. The Golden Age was when the Ottoman Empire was at its largest, holding land in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The Ottoman Empire was respected and feared by others.

However, more than simply military achievement and land holdings is the fact that the Ottoman Empire expanded their knowledge and practice of the arts and education. People were paid to paint or create music, and art was celebrated throughout the empire. Additionally, with free schooling, many more could have a chance to learn and ascend to a higher level in society. Refugees were welcomed, and these refugees strongly supported the kingdom that had let them in. For this reason, the Ottoman Empire was even more fortified in its strength, acting its place of strong world power.

Sadly, the rule of Suleyman I was the last in line during the Golden Age. The future rulers were not as careful or strategic. For a few reasons as will be shown in the following chapters, the Ottoman Empire began its decline with the ascension of Selim II.

Chapter 5: The Decline of the Ottoman Empire

After the death of Suleyman I, the decline of the Ottoman Empire was unabating. While a few reforms and successes may have made a time in the decline feel as though the Ottoman Empire could reclaim its former glory, the truth is that these recoveries never lasted long. The end of the Ottoman Empire was imminent.

Selim II

Selim II's reign was the beginning of the Ottoman Empire's downfall. Having a look into his character and personality might provide some insight as to why. "Selim was renowned for his love of wine, earning the title 'the Sod'"("Selim II," New World Encyclopedia). Another nickname he had was the Drunkard. Selim II was not a situation of a person who accomplished a lot, even while being drunk a majority of the time. Selim II's seeming indifference toward the empire is part of the reason his rule was the beginning of the empire's decline. Selim II's reign could not have been more antithetical when compared with his father's.

Suleyman I was known for his justice and fair treatment, while Selim II was known for his inability to follow a treaty. He would enter into treaties then break them when they no longer suited his purposes. While he did experience some victories, he then experienced losses that were more detrimental. The fact that Selim II was so incompetent to rule the kingdom in an efficient way emphasizes that dynastic systems where the heir is a child of the current ruler are not always the most beneficial for a kingdom. In Selim II's case, this is certainly true.

Based on Selim II's character and training, it was not likely that he would become the next Ottoman sultan. However, circumstances were in his favor. Among the four sons his father had, he was the only one living when his father died. Mehmed, his brother, was killed by smallpox. Mustafa, the brother who had been selected to ascend to the throne, was strangled by their father. Last of all, Selim II entered into a conflict with his brother Bayezid, and with his father's support, they killed him while he was in hiding.

Before Selim II ascended the throne, he married a woman whose name is contested. Either way, she bore him a son who would be his successor. Selim II officially became sultan on September 7, 1566. As sultan, Selim II displayed no interest in military warfare and preferred pursuing orgies and debauches. Mehmed Sokullu, Selim II's Grand Vizier, controlled the affairs the sultan should have been maintaining. Mehmed even closed a treaty in Constantinople that gained the Ottoman Empire a yearly payment and authority over Moldavia and Wallachia.

With plans to build a canal between Volga and Don, the Janissaries were sent to capture the land between, laying siege on Astrakhan. However, the Russians sent down an army force to help Astrakhan and beat back the Ottomans. After a bitter battle, the Ottoman forces were finally destroyed by a storm. This was the Ottomans' first battle with the Russian forces.

In 1571, Cyprus was defeated, giving the Ottomans the force they needed to push the Spanish and the Italian out of the Mediterranean Sea. The Ottoman Empire focused on rebuilding its navy after such a raging battle, and this process only took six months. These successes and defeats were made by Selim II's grand vizier, not under Selim II's direction, as he remained out of touch with the war affairs going on.

In 1574, Selim II died after only an eight year reign of the Ottoman Empire. His death was rumored to have been caused by drinking too much wine. When he entered the baths, he slipped and fell, causing his death ("Sultan Selim II 'The Drunkard'. . .").

While Selim II was ruling, his sister acting as Valide Sultan as Selim II's mother had died before he took the throne. "Sultan Selim was loved by the people because of his soft character and his sensitive attitude and for his generosity. . .he also built the tomb of his eldest brother Sehzade Mustafa who was executed in 1553." ("Selim II" Wikipedia). These actions show that while Selim II may not have been strong enough to make military decisions and carry the role as sultan, he did try to do good in his own ways.

Selim II's wife, a Venetian, was shown how greatly he loved her in the way he gave to her financially. This wife received 1000 aspers a day as opposed to the other wives and concubines who would only receive forty per day ("Selim II" Wikipedia). Selim II had eleven children total, seven sons and four daughters.

From the beginning, Selim II had a tough reign as other made him feel as though he needed to measure up to his father. Because of his father's greatness, doing so would be almost impossible for an excellent sultan, and Selim II did not even meet the standard of an excellent sultan.

While Suleyman I had been a religious man, Selim II did not seem to care at all about the Islamic faith. Schevill wrote: "The brilliant Soluman was followed by a man who failed to inherit a single one of his father's merits. Selim II. . .was incapable, indolent, pleasure-loving,

and as foreign to the field and council chamber as he was at home in the soft atmosphere of the imperial harem." ("Selim II" New World Encyclopedia). Selim II's reign of luxury was followed by a line of later sultans who focused more on giving themselves to pleasure than to serving the kingdom.

Because the Ottoman Empire had been so well known for its superior military techniques, other countries copied the Ottomans and their military format. When a succession of emperors who did not care about the kingdom began to rule, the Ottoman military began to fall apart, meaning they were not prepared when other countries attacked with the techniques they had mastered after watching the Ottomans fight. While historians contend who exactly brought on the period of decay for the Ottomans, no one disagrees with the fact that it began with either Selim II or his son. The fact that the following sultans did not work to uphold the kingdom either also contributed to the successive downfall of the once great kingdom as one sultan after another chose luxury over taking their position seriously.

Murad III

Murad III was born in July of 1546, and his time as sultan was peppered with wars against Iran and Austria. If the declination of the Ottoman Empire was not clear in his father's reign, it definitely became clear during Murad III's reign. Murad III tried to be militarily offensive to protect the Ottoman Empire borders; however, he preferred respecting the wisdom of his harem women rather than his grand vizier. "Murad's reign is most remembered as a period of economic stagnation and failures in seemingly endless warfare on two fronts." ("Murad III" Wikipedia).

When Murad III was twelve years old, he was given the position of sancakbeyi of Aksehir by his grandfather, Suleyman I, who was sultan

at the time. When his father began ruling, Murad was given a position governing Manisa, being the only son sent out of his father's house to govern a province.

In 1574, Murad III succeeded his father as sultan and strangled his five younger brothers immediately. Grand Vizier Mehmed who managed to help Selim II during his reign remained the grand vizier until he was assassinated in 1579. Constant battle took place during the reign of Murad III. The Ottoman Empire had struck a treaty with the Safavids in 1555 to stop the constant fighting between them. However, after the shah in charge of the Safavids died, Murad III strove to take advantage of the chaos and declared war on war on the Safavids.

The Grand Vizier Mehmed advised against this move on Murad III's part; however, he went against this advice, instead listening to two other viziers who advised him to fight the Safavids. The war lasted for twelve years and exhausted the Ottoman army. In 1590, the Istanbul Treaty was established. Though the fighting took many years, this treaty gave the Ottomans several territorial gains. Murad III took this as an advantage and success on the empire's part.

The reign of Murad III was a time of financial problems as the kingdom was trying to keep up with the technology advances around the world. While this kept the army up-to-date in the use of firearms and other weapons being created, it was also a drain on the empire's treasury. The New World and its discoveries brought in a high amount of silver. This caused the currency to inflate and money to lose its value. Peasants broke up the fief system as they were forced to move as the result of inflated taxes.

Corruption within the government rose as citizens fought for those few desired positions. Murad III was accused of accepting inflated bribes to award certain positions to certain people. This corruption was linked to the over-population. While there was more money, it was worth less, and those in the empire were having trouble covering their expenses. Those who had money supported their favorite candidates for governor positions and tried to bribe them into election.

Murad III began conversing with Catherine I of England, discussing the particulars of their kingdoms. Murad III advocated an alliance between the two kingdoms, but it was never made a reality even though many serious discussions about doing so took place between the two. However, even without an alliance, England did help the Ottoman Empire in its exports, send them tin and ammunition to help benefit the building of their weapons. When a war broke out with Spain in 1585, Catherine I more seriously considered the prospect of uniting with the Ottoman Empire against the Spanish. However, a positive decision in that aspect was not made during Murad III's reign.

The Battle of Sisak broke out in 1593, near the end of Murad III's reign. The battle was fought between the Ottomans and the combined forces of the Bosnians and the Hapsburgs from Austria. Because the Ottomans had attempted to capture the Sisak fortress twice before in the previous years, this battle should not have come as a surprise. In June of 1593, the Ottoman army laid siege on the fortress, which was not supplied with many protectors at the time. As the battle began to turn in Ottoman favor, those in Sisak called out for help. The Austrians responded bringing thousands of men to change the tide of the battle. Even though their numbers were reported to the Ottomans, the Ottoman leader expressed no fear. The first attack from the Austrians was deflected. However, afterward, the Austrians led a surprise attack that greatly hurt the Ottoman army. They began

retreating across the river, and many drowned in the process or were picked off by the Austrians' weapons.

This battle was a complete defeat for the Ottomans, and throughout Europe, the Austrian battle leaders were praised. Once the news reached Murad III, he felt he must avenge the embarrassing defeat of his army. His sister seconded that decision as her son was killed in the battle. Through another battle, the Ottomans were able to take the Sisak fortress. However, not long after, they were attacked again. Setting the fortress on fire, the Ottomans fled back home to safety.

In 1595, Murad III died, and it is believed that this death was natural, nothing brought on by poisons or other suspicious means. He was buried in a tomb beside the Hagia Sophia along with his wives, concubines, and children. Murad III is known for changing the burial customs in regard to his mother. He buried her next to his father. This move was revolutionary as a concubine had never been buried next to royalty as Murad III did with his mother.

Murad III's life stepped a bit out of the normal sultan pattern as he became the second sultan to never go out on military raids with his armies. His reign was spent entirely in Istanbul. The example set by Murad III and his father could be part of the reason that the Ottoman Empire began its downfall. The sultans seemed less concerned about military warfare and more concerned about luxurious palace life.

Murad III was actually condemned by his mother for living a monogamous lifestyle prior to his ascension to the throne. She worried that he would have no son to succeed him if his one son with his only wife died. Though Murad III already had a son and two daughters with his wife, his mother declared that was not enough. Some time

later, when he was the sultan, he was given two concubines as a gift. However, he seemed unable to give them children. This impotence was blamed on Murad III's wife who must have performed witchcraft on her husband as to make him unable to have children with other women. The wife's servants were even tortured to find out information on this facet, although no one was ever found guilty.

Physicians worked to find a cure for Murad III, eventually producing a mixture that helped Murad III in his ability to have children. The mixture also increased his sexual appetite, and over a hundred children are said to be fathered by Murad III.

Murad III kept his interest in arts strong and commissioned artists to complete several works, including "the most heavily illustrated biographical work on the life of the Islamic prophet Muhammad" ("Murad III" Wikipedia). Murad III was always extending invitation to famous artists or scientists in his kingdom. He was constantly trying to learn more and see more, even though he never left Istanbul.

During this time of the empire, dreams were seen as a method of understanding one's life. The relationship between disciples and their masters was often seen in the open communication they expressed through letter writing. Disciples were required to share their dreams with their masters. Murad III also shared every dream he had as he saw them as a tool to better understand his life.

The rule of Murad III, while not as destructive as his father's had been, was also not as beneficial as his grandfather's was. Even though the kingdom experienced some victories, there were also a decided number of defeats and losses. However, the empire had not lost much, not yet.

Mehmed III

Mehmed III was born in 1566, the last year of his great-grandfather's reign. His grandfather, Selim II, only reigned for a few years, and Mehmed III became the crown prince when his father began reigning in 1574. After growing up with a strong education, Mehmed III was given the position of Manisa governor in 1583. Mehmed III began ruling as sultan in 1595 when he was twenty-eight years old.

Mehmed III started his reign in a rather violent way by having nineteen of his brothers strangled to death to protect his throne. Soon after Mehmed III took the throne, two of his viziers began arguing. Mehmed III was not a very active sultan, preferring to let his mother as the valide sultan make the important decisions. As so, she supported one of the viziers in the argument. Mehmed III had his grand vizier deposed on a claim of not properly caring for Wallachia and replaced him with the vizier that his mother supported.

The Austro-Hungarian War was one of the most important occurrences during Mehmed III's reign. This war lasted thirteen years from start to finish and officially began before Mehmed III even became sultan. As the Ottoman army was defeated over and over, Mehmed III started personally commanding the troops, doing something the last two sultans had not done: involve himself in the military. After a mild success, Mehmed III wanted to retreat to Istanbul when he heard the Hapsburg army coming. However, in the Battle of Keresztes, the Ottomans were able to defeat the combined Austrian and Transylvanian forces. Nevertheless, Mehmed III showed his lack of courage in his desire to flee and leave his army behind.

With that victory behind them, Mehmed III seemed to like the

memory of being on the battlefield better than he had actually enjoyed it when it was a reality. He wanted to campaign with his army again. However, due to health problems, the doctors recommended he not campaign for a while.

The Austrians were not finished battling the Ottomans, and soon after, the Ottomans began to experience a few defeats. The Ottomans lost Gyor, one of the most important cities in Hungary. Additionally, the Ottomans lost against a troop of Wallachian soldiers in 1599. After laying siege on Nagykanisza, the Ottomans were able to capture the city in 1600. The rivalry between the Ottomans and the Austrians was still not solved when Mehmed III died, meaning that the war dominated his reign.

While the Austro-Hungarian War was a main part of Mehmed III's reign, he also had some personal counts of treason with which to deal. Karayazici Abdulhalim captured a city of the Ottomans in Anatolia and pronounced himself sultan, even going so far as to select a grand vizier. To think that this man was previously an Ottoman official makes one wonder why he would make such a bold move. Once the news reached Mehmed III, he had no mercy in dealing with the rebels, killing as many as they could capture. Abdulhalim fled the city when the Ottoman forces entered and conquered the city. Abdulhalim's brother, who had stayed behind, killed the leader of that Ottoman army element then marched on to capture and burn another Ottoman city. In the end, the rebellion was put down completely, and those who had led it were executed.

In 1599, Mehmed III received a large gift from England. The gift had been meant for his father, but in either case, the purpose of Elizabeth's gifts was to seal the relationship and alliance between England and the Ottoman Empire. This was especially important for England as

Spain was becoming a major threat. Included in the gift were the following: an organ dressed in jewels and a ceremonial coach. The gift arrived on one of England's best ships. Mehmed III personally inspected the ship and was amazed by the thought of England's navy's ability and strength. He began to see how beneficial the relationship could be.

Further, Mehmed III was a very meticulous follower of Islam, and he promoted the religion throughout his kingdom. However, Mehmed III had a very weak body, and he would become ill upon hearing difficult news. With the ongoing war and the actions of Karayazici Abdulhalim, this negative news happened quite often. Becoming depressed with the news, Mehmed III ordered all taverns closed and banned the use of alcohol.

Mehmed III was not as interested in artistic expression as his father had been. He ceased supporting groups and sponsoring artists to paint in the palace, preferring to use the treasury's money for other activities.

"Mehmed III's reign coincided with serious, social, economic, and political unrest. Aggravated financial problems, sociopolitical disturbances in Anatolia, and a costly war with the Hapsburgs all added up to a crisis that was hard to manage" (A'goston, 369).

Mehmed III's mother was very involved in the political decisions made during his reign, and the Janissaries did not approve of that. They constantly acted to demonstrate their disapproval. A lady-in-waiting was murdered by the Janissaries on claims of trying to interfere with ruling decisions.

Because earlier revolts had not been handled well, more and more rebellions continued to spring up throughout Mehmed III's reign. Those who rebelled were angered by those who came to collect taxes. They claimed that those in high positions were being chosen based on the amount of their bribe not the amount of their intelligence. The rebels pushed to speak with Mehmed III in person so they could explain their problems as they said that those under Mehmed III deliberately kept information from him. Mehmed III listened to the rebels, and when they tried to kill one of his officials, the official showed everyone a specific order he had received that stated he was not to inform the sultan of depressing circumstances, validating the claim of the rebels.

The reign of Mehmed III was characterized by his court presence. While he did campaign some in the beginning of his reign, the role of sultan was gradually shifting. No longer was the sultan required to go to battle to encourage his troops. Now, the sultan was expected to stay in the court and deal with problems that arose from political difficulties.

Mehmed III died at the age of thirty-seven in 1603. The cause of his death is unknown; however, nothing suspicious is suspected. He did have weak health as displayed by how quickly bad news could affect his health. Therefore, his death could have been related to his health. Mehmed III had appointed Mahmud to become his heir, but this son died as a result of an affiliation between Mehmed III's mother and vizier.

Ahmed I

Ahmed I was born in 1590 when his grandfather was ruling. From the beginning, Ahmed I was given an amazing education, giving him the ability to speak Arabic and Persian fluently. Ahmed I was interested in

archery, riding, hunting, and fencing. He came to the throne as sultan determined to make some changes in the empire.

However, he did not have a very good start. First of all, it must be remembered that the Austro-Hungarian War had still not finished. When Ahmed I came into his position as sultan, he needed to deal with the wars that were already started. Unfortunately, both of the current wars ended disparagingly for the Ottoman Empire. Through a treaty, the Austrians escaped from having to pay annual tribute.

The Ottomans went to war against the Safavids once again. However, by the time Ahmed I came to the throne and was able to address the problem with Safavids, sending off an army to fight, the Safavids were already making captures. The commander of the Ottoman segment fighting the Safavids was very indecisive, first saying one thing then another, making the soldiers upset and distrusting of him ("Ahmed I" Wikipedia).

As another battle took place between the Ottomans and the Safavids, some Ottomans were taken as prisoners. The army was forced to flee, and during this time more troops were sent to help. Unfortunately the commander of the troops who came as backup died and left the army in chaos. The Safavids were then able to take over three important cities: Ganja, Shirvan, and Shamakhi.

The Jelali revolts continued under Ahmed I's rule as a result of the people's frustration with raised taxes and weaker protection from the army. The revolts rose up in scattered areas around the kingdom with no warning, making them difficult to prepare for. Ahmed I sent armies to deal with the problems, but there were always more little citizen armies rising up and trying to take over one city at a time.

Those citizens who were not participating fled the villages in fear, leaving them empty. Military chiefs of the Jelali revolts would claim the cities as a victory. This hurt the Ottoman Empire in two ways. First of all, its citizens were disagreeing and disputing among themselves, making order a difficult thing to find. Secondly, those cities that had been emptied of citizens based on the war taking place there were not providing tax to the empire, meaning the government did not have as much income. In 1609, Ahmed I stopped trying to fight back and struck a sort of treaty with his citizens, promising to give them their proper rights. With that in place, he began to resettle the villages.

The Treaty of Nasuh Pasha was signed in 1612 with the Safavid Shah. The point of this treaty was to stop the fighting between the two parties and allow the Ottomans to focus on the other problems in their kingdom. This treaty required the Safavids to pay an amount of silks to the Ottomans every year and the borders to return to the way they had been in 1555, meaning that the Ottomans lost some land. However, in 1615, the Safavids did not fulfill their end of the treaty, giving the Ottomans no silks. Ahmed I commanded the grand vizier to ready the armies for attack. However, the attack was delayed for a year, and the Safavids had time to ready their armies. By the time the Ottomans attacked, the Safavids were ready to fight back. Unfortunately, the Ottomans did not experience success in their battles, and the Safavids captured several territories.

On the positive side, Ahmed I was able to renew trade with several European nations, even setting up a trade agreement with the Netherlands for the first time. This benefited the Ottomans as they did not have as many regulations binding them as before and they were able to receive more materials that they desperately needed.

Interestingly enough, Ahmed I destroyed one of the presents, the musical clock organ, the queen of England had sent to his father a few decades ago. It is said he destroyed the piece as it reminded him of how powerful the Western reaches of Europe were becoming and how the power of the Ottoman Empire was waning.

Ahmed I was also responsible for destroying the fratricide policy (see chapter three for a further explanation about this policy). When Ahmed I came to throne, he did not kill all his brothers as had been the custom up until that point. Perhaps the fact that he was more merciful was the reason he wanted future sultans to be more merciful to their families.

In 1617, Ahmed I died of typhus fever as the age of twenty-eight. Looking into Ahmed I's life shows his connection to the number fourteen. Ahmed I was the fourteenth sultan of the Ottoman Empire. He also came to the throne at the age of fourteen and reigned for fourteen years.

Unlike some of his ancestors, Ahmed I was very respectful "Ahmed was pious and made many donations, especially to the holy places of Mecca and Medina. He built the great Blue Mosque near the Church of Hagia Sophia" ("Ahmed I" Britannica). This Blue Mosque became one of the most famous and popular mosques in Turkey.

Mustafa I

Mustafa I became the sultan after Ahmed I, who was actually his brother not his father. This is the first case of power passing from brother to brother as it was normally passed down to the son. However, because Ahmed I destroyed the policy of fratricide, this passing of power was now possible. Mustafa I actually reigned in two

rounds, the first being from 1617 to 1618 and the second being from 1622 to 1623. When Ahmed I died, it was argued that his son was too young to take the throne, and his brother would be a better sultan instead. However, Mustafa I acted quite odd. He would do things such as yank viziers' beards or throw coins at birds, demonstrating that something was a bit wrong in his brain. Mustafa I was only given the title of sultan so that another could drive his decisions from behind.

After his first short reign, a group supporting Ahmed I's son, Osman II, put Osman II on the throne, claiming that Mustafa I was not fit to reign. When Mustafa I was reinstated as sultan in 1622, he would constantly circle the palace, knocking on doors and calling for his nephew, Osman II, to help him with the role of sultan. During Mustafa I's two short reigns as sultan, the Janissaries and the cavalry were in a disagreement, and the Abaza rebellion also took place. However, his mental condition caused Mustafa I to remain a pawn in the hands of his viziers. Once another eligible ruler was found, Mustafa I was kept in confinement until he died in 1639. Mustafa I is believed to be the least effective sultan in the history of the Ottoman Empire.

Osman II

Osman II reigned for four years from 1618 until 1622. When his uncle Mustafa I took the throne in 1617, Osman II was only thirteen years old. Speculation believes that Osman II did not receive the throne in place of his uncle for lack of a mother lobbying in his interest ("Osman II" Wikipedia). Osman II had an army supporting him in throwing his uncle off the throne. At that point, even though he was only fourteen, Osman II became an assertive sultan, signing a peace treaty to secure the Ottomans' eastern boundary. However, Osman II also experienced some humiliating defeats against the Polish.

One weakness in Osman II's reign was his lack of a mother to run the harem and help advise him. However, Osman II still had ideas and

pushed forward with them. Osman II identified the harm the Janissaries were doing and attempted to punish them, planning to create a more loyal army than the Janissaries had been in recent years. The Janissaries rose up and captured Osman II, later suppressing him and strangling him to death at the age of eighteen. Osman II did have three children at the time of his death, but the same as concluded by Osman II's young age, these children were far too young to take the throne. For this reason, Mustafa I was allowed the position of sultan once again.

Murad IV

Murad IV was born in 1612, and he was only five years old when his father, Ahmed I, died. Being too young to take over the throne, Mustafa I and Osman II took their turns as sultan. In 1623, Murad IV was only eleven years old when he became the Ottoman Empire's sultan. Murad IV is remembered for his cruelty.

In the beginning of Murad IV's reign, his relatives made the decisions for him, destroying the Ottoman Empire's peace as they did so. The Safavids invaded and could not be beaten, and the Janissaries entered the palace and killed the grand vizier. In 1632, Murad IV took control of his role as sultan and began making his own decisions. Because there was such riotous behavior rampant in his empire, Murad IV took extreme measures to try to fix the empire, even going so far as to ban alcohol and tobacco. Supposedly, he would roam taverns in disguise, looking for those breaking his regulations. If he found someone, he would discard his disguise and kill them on the spot.

The Ottoman-Safavid War took place during Murad IV's reign, and once he began making his own decisions, he was a large part of stopping the Safavids. Murad IV was an excellent leader for the army, and he led the army against the Safavids, capturing the following

territories: Azerbaijan, Tabriz, Hamadan, and Baghdad. He created a treaty to end the war that caused the Ottomans to come out victoriously. This war was monumental as it was the last time a sultan in the Ottoman Empire led his army in the battlefield. During his time as sultan, Murad IV emphasized the importance of architecture, becoming responsible for the building of the Meydani Mosque, Konya Serefeddin Mosque, schools, tombs, and fountains. Last of all, Murad IV created an alliance with the Mughal Empire to fight against their common enemy: the Safavids. Murad IV died in 1640 due to cirrhosis of the liver. It is rumored that he ordered the execution of his brother, who was mad; however, the order was not carried out.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim was Murad IV's mad brother. Because he had spent so much of his early life in the Kafes, a place of confinement for male relatives of the sultan, Ibrahim is believed to have developed psychoneurosis ("Ibrahim of the Ottoman Empire"). Being the only eligible, living crown prince of the Ottoman Empire, Ibrahim was given the place of sultan. However, Ibrahim was suspicious that his brother was still alive and planning to kill him, and he needed a lot of convincing to take the throne. Kra Mustafa Pasha was the grand vizier during the first four years of Ibrahim's reign, and this grand vizier helped stabilize the economy with a coinage reform. Ibrahim would disguise himself and observe the Ottoman Empire, reporting any problems he observed to the grand vizier.

Ibrahim was often bothered with physical ailments and being the last Ottoman male in the family alive, he was encouraged to have children. He did indeed father nine sons, carrying on the family reign. Subsequently, Ibrahim became enraged when a group attacked a ship of Muslims traveling to Mecca, and he wanted to kill all Christians in his kingdom. His grand vizier persuaded him that such a move was not beneficial and eventually talked him out of the idea. Such

outlandish behavior was characteristic of Ibrahim's reign. Taxes were raised so Ibrahim could have spending money, and the people of the empire rebelled against this. Ibrahim's grand vizier was killed and a corrupt grand vizier took his place for the last four years of Ibrahim's reign. In 1648, both Ibrahim and his grand vizier were seized. The grand vizier was executed right away, but Ibrahim had to wait ten days before his execution was permitted. Ibrahim's six-year-old son took his title as sultan.

Mehmed IV

Mehmed IV was born in 1642 to Ibrahim, and he had a great influence in how the role of the sultan changed because he gifted the grand vizier a large amount of executive power. One interesting story is recorded about Mehmed IV's childhood. When Mehmed was a baby, his father and mother were arguing. Ibrahim was extremely angered, and he seized his infant son from his wife's arms and threw him into a cistern. Mehmed IV did not die, but he was left with a mark to forever remember the anger of his father ("Mehmed IV, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire").

Unrest within the Ottoman Empire was strong when Mehmed IV took the throne. Venetians had defeated the Ottomans, and uprisings were taking place throughout Anatolia. For this reason, Mehmed IV's mother gave his grand vizier full power to make decisions in the sultan's place. With the help of his grand vizier, Mehmed IV's reign is known for the revivals brought to the economy in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans were successful in the Cretan War, gaining back territory, and the empire reached the borders of Ukraine. However, once Kara Mustafa succeeded the previous grand vizier, the Ottoman Empire took a great loss against the Austrians and Poles.

The Great Turkish War began in 1683, as the Poles united with the

Austrians to beat back the Ottoman troops. Unrest among the Ottoman troops rose, and the grand vizier fled, fearing for his life. Mehmed IV tried to take over the situation and make better decisions in regards to dealings with other countries, but the Janissaries combined with some other powerful leaders deposed Mehmed IV after this rousing defeat. His brother was selected as a better ruler. Mehmed IV died in 1693, a few years after he was deposed. While his reign did bring some stability to the Ottoman Empire, Mehmed IV is most known for giving such a large amount of power to the grand vizier, setting a trend for the future sultans.

Suleyman II

Suleyman II was favored by the Janissaries to take the throne from his brother and do a better job of protecting the Ottoman Empire. The war between the Ottomans and Hapsburgs dominated the beginning of Suleyman II's reign. As soon as he assumed the throne, the Ottomans experienced defeat as the Russians were joining the other European forces. The Crimean campaigns began. However, with the assistance of Suleyman II's grand vizier, the empire was able to experience some victories against the Austrians and suppress a few uprisings in Bulgaria and Macedonia. Suleyman II died in 1691, and not a lot is known about his death or the reasons behind it. Because he was reigning for only four short years, Suleyman II did not leave a large impression in the Ottoman Empire's story. He did have a few victories, but none of the land he took back was a lasting addition to the empire.

Ahmed II

Ahmed II was the third son of Ibrahim's to take his place as sultan. Born in the early 1640s, Ahmed II was in his early fifties when he took the throne in 1691, and his rule only lasted four years. Ahmed II focused on fighting back the Hapsburgs; however, he did not

experience much success. The Ottomans lost land and experienced fires in Istanbul. Ahmed II also sought to reform taxes in the kingdom, setting up a lifelong farm tax. Ahmed II's grand vizier, Köprülüzade Fazıl Mustafa Pasha, helped Ahmed take some wise steps. His grand vizier immediately executed dozens of officials in the kingdom who had proved themselves to be corrupt. Additionally, he adjusted the tax system so that the taxes would be more fair for the citizens, instead of being outrageously high.

In a confrontation against the Hapsburgs, the Ottomans suffered serious losses, including the death of Ahmed II's grand vizier in what is known as " 'the bloodiest battle of the century' " ("Ahmed II" Wikipedia). The Ottomans continued to suffer losses in Hungary, leaving them with only a small hold of land in Hungary at the end of Ahmed II's rule. Ahmed II died in 1695 with an unspecified disease.

Mustafa II

Mustafa II was the son of Mehmed IV, and he eventually gave up the throne to let his brother rule in 1703. The Great Turkish War continued into Mustafa II's reign, and Mustafa II took charge of military campaigns, experiencing some losses and some successes. In 1697, the Ottoman Empire experienced such a large failure in battle, which included the grand vizier's death, that Mustafa II signed a treaty with the Holy League. A treaty which followed in 1699 gave up the Ottoman Empire's claim on any land in Hungary. Not approving of his father's giving up of power to the grand viziers, Mustafa II tried to create positions that were responsible for reporting to him, giving himself more power. However, his attempts failed in that department. He was deposed in 1703 and died a few months later.

Ahmed III

Ahmed III was also a son of Mehmed IV, and he began ruling in 1703. From the beginning of his reign, Ahmed III sought to keep his

relations with France friendly, partly based on the Russian threat and partly based on his two French wives. Ahmed III gave refuge to the fleeing king of Sweden, who later convinced him he should declare war on Russia. Even though Ahmed III did not originally want to enter into battle with Russia, he actually "came nearer than any Ottoman sovereign before or since to breaking the power of his northern rival" ("Ahmed III"). The Ottomans experienced so many victories that they were on the point of entering Moscow, when Ahmed III got report that the Safavids were entering his kingdom. He sent his soldiers to deal with that problem first.

While disasters did pepper Ahmed III's rule, he was not without some success. He was able to gain Azov, Morea, and part of Persia. The finances of the Ottoman Empire were left in good order, and this act was done without overtaxing the citizens. Ahmed III wanted his kingdom to flourish, and as such, he allowed a printing press to produce documents in Arabic and Turkish languages. Before the year of 1729, all printed documents were in Greek, Armenian, or Hebrew, so this breakthrough was a real success for those who did not speak any of the above three languages. Additionally, Ahmed III maintained relationships with the Mughal Empire. The Mughal Empire sent gifts and letters, occasionally calling on the Ottomans for help as others attacked their small empire.

Ahmed III was not a popular ruler based on his pride and his selfish use of the kingdom's resources. In September of 1730, those who disagreed with Ahmed III, including soldiers, Janissaries, and those in political positions, rebelled against him and forced Ahmed III to give up his throne. Ahmed III chose his nephew to be the next sovereign and respected him as such. After six years of confinement, Ahmed III died. Throughout his life, Ahmed III fathered thirty-four sons. His rule is referred to as the Tulip Era, because of the peace between the years of 1718 and 1730.

Mahmud I

Mahmud I was the son of Mustafa II, and he was put on the throne by his uncle who did so trying to avoid a rebellion. However, it was not avoided completely, and the insurgents took control even though Mahmud I was the sultan. Crimea and the Janissaries teamed together to put down the rebellion within the Ottoman Empire. In 1731, the leader of the rebellion, Halil, was strangled. During his time as sultan, Mahmud I did not do the main governing, as he handed that over to his viziers. He preferred to spend his time on poetry. During his reign, the Ottoman Empire fought with Persia, Russia, and Austria ("Mahmud I" Infoplease). Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI mostly helped the Russian side but also helped the Ottoman Empire retake northern Serbia. Mahmud I declared the Ottoman-Persian War, and the Mughal Empire worked closely at their side until the Shah of the Mughal Empire died in 1748. Mahmud I is responsible for some of the most important libraries founded in the Ottoman Empire (A'goston, 335). He enjoyed renovating mosques to add schools and hospitals designed to benefit the citizens of the Ottoman Empire. Little more is known about Mahmud I's reign. He died in 1754 at 58 years old.

Osman III

Osman III was also a son of Mustafa II, and he took the throne when his brother died. At fifty-five years of age, he was the oldest sultan to take the throne at that time. Because Osman III only ruled three years (1754-1757), not much was accomplished during his reign. However, he made the rules against non-Muslims even stricter, requiring them to wear distinctive clothing to identify them as a non-Muslim ("Osman III"). This resulted in persecution for the non-Muslims, something that had previously been avoided.

During Osman III's reign, there was a memorable fire in Istanbul that destroyed 3,851 buildings (A'goston, 447). This fire lasted two days

and was the biggest to that date. The Golden Horn (a waterway) was also frozen during this time, another memorable event from Osman III's reign. Osman III had the Nuruosmaniye Mosque built during his reign, and this mosque, completed in 1755, is considered one of the greatest examples of the Baroque style of architecture.

After going through seven grand viziers in two years, Koca Ragip Pasha was finally chosen as grand vizier. This man would become one of the most remembered grand viziers of the Ottoman Empire. After the fire that wreaked havoc in Istanbul, Osman III began a rebuilding effort, and his construction is still standing today. Osman III was seen as a heartless man displayed both by his disposition of grand viziers so quickly and by his dislike for encountering women. It is said that he wore metal shoes so the women would hear him coming and leave his walkway clear ("Osman III"). Osman III died in the palace in Istanbul in October of 1757.

Mustafa III

Mustafa III was the son of Ahmed III, and he took the throne in 1757. Mustafa III was an educated man, interested in the study of the stars. He was seen as a merciful and kind sultan ("Ottoman: The Sultans-Mustafa III"). Mustafa III desired to work alongside the European Powers, not against them. For that reason, he strengthened the army and worked on unity within the empire. This strengthening included educating those already in the army and developing artillery and better maritime divisions. Mustafa III also arranged further study into mathematics and science for those in his kingdom.

However, even with these excellent steps in the right direction, Mustafa III was a little too late with his reforms. The Ottoman Empire had declined too far for these reforms to bring it back to its former glory. Mustafa III tried to avoid war, knowing that the empire was not

prepared yet to succeed. For this reason, when England took Crimea, Mustafa III did not react. However, shortly before his death(of a heart attack), Mustafa III was forced into a conflict with Russia to preserve the Ottoman Empire's dignity. However, the Ottomans lost many of the battles with the Russians, and the war ended with a treaty directly after Mustafa III's death.

Abdulhamid I

Abdulhamid I, son of Ahmed III, can also be written as Abdulhamid, Abdul Hamid, or Abd Al-Hamid. Any of those spellings are correct and are referring to this twenty-seventh sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Born in 1725, Abdulhamid I was nearly fifty years old when he took the position of sultan. As a child, Abdulhamid I's relatives were ruling the Ottoman Empire, and as was the custom, they imprisoned him and his family to keep them from leading revolts against the throne. As so, Abdulhamid I spent many of his first years shut up in prison, and his mother was the one giving him an education. Abdulhamid I took over his brother's throne when he died in 1774.

One of Abdulhamid I's first steps of action once he took the throne was to make peace with Russia. The war was ended with the signature of the Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca. The treaty was not beneficial for the Ottoman Empire except that it stopped the losing battle the Ottomans were fighting with the Russians. However, they had to give up various territories, including areas around the Sea of Azov and a space between the Bug and Dnieper Rivers. Additionally, the Russians were allowed the freedom to travel and trade throughout the Ottoman Empire ("Abdulhamid I").

However, having been in confinement the majority of his life left Abdulhamid I with little concern for the state of the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, Abdulhamid I still strove for peace in the empire, and he

also took the opportunity to promote his Islamic beliefs. Seeing their defeat with Russia, Abdulhamid I worked on creating a more unified and prepared army. The Imperial Naval Engineering School was created at this time and is credited to Abdulhamid I and his quest for military preparedness. Feeling confident with his new and improved army, Abdulhamid I worked on strengthening the Ottoman reign of various parts of the kingdom where Ottoman rule was not at its best. Unfortunately, even though Abdulhamid I experienced some successes in these quests, the empire had still lost the Crimean territory, which had at first become independent and later become controlled by Russia.

Russia claimed to protect the Christians of the east, causing further conflict with the Ottoman Empire. In 1787, the Ottomans declared war against Russia. The war did not go well, and soon after the start, Austria joined the war on Russia's side. At the end of 1788, Russia took Ochakov and executed all of the inhabitants. This is said to have broken Abdulhamid I's spirit, causing him to die in early 1789 ("Abdul Hamid I").

Throughout his reign, Abdulhamid I exposed his large heart through personally caring about those who worked with him and supervising those in government positions to protect against corruptness ("Abdul Hamid I"). In 1789, the Ottoman Empire was sought for help against the British East India Company. Abdulhamid I denied the request, saying that the Ottomans were already engaged elsewhere and could not divide their forces to assist another area. In April of 1789, Abdulhamid I died in Constantinople and was buried in a tomb that he had built for himself.

Abdulhamid I's heart is seen in the way that he personally assisted and directed the fire brigade in 1782, and this action gave him favor in the eyes of the people. He was even called a saint, not simply for this action but for the many more he did during his reign. Abdulhamid I

was remembered as a gracious sultan.

Selim III

Selim III was the son of Mustafa III, and he spent his reign focusing on reforming the kingdom through "a program of Westernization" ("Selim III" Britannica). Mustafa III believed in mysticism and was told by an oracle that Selim III would conquer the world. For this reason, Mustafa III took special care of his son and made sure that he was well-educated. Mustafa III also indicated that Selim III was to be his successor. However, when Mustafa III died, his brother Abdulhamid I took the throne. Surprisingly, Abdulhamid I did not mistreat his nephew, Selim III. Instead, he made sure that his education continued and that he was well cared for. When his uncle Abdulhamid I died, Selim III succeeded him at the age of almost twenty-seven.

Before anything else, Selim III was a poet. He promoted literary expression, and the palace was a display of his work. His works were also hung up throughout the empire in different mosques. Additionally, Selim III was a musician.

Selim III became the sultan in 1789. Even before he became sultan, he had created various plans for how he would reform the empire. However, the Ottoman Empire was still fighting with Russia and Austria, and Selim III had to focus on that fighting first. In 1792, the Ottomans were forced to sign a treaty that once again left them at a loss, giving up completely the western Black Sea coast.

With this war completed, Selim III could turn his focus onto reforming the Janissaries. Unfortunately, his reforms met with great contempt and rebellion. This caused Selim III to focus solely on reforming the general army division, based on the tactics and weapons being used in

Europe at the time. New soldiers were trained in special training centers, and the fighting force kept a cap of 10,000 active soldiers ("Selim III" Wikipedia). The money to raise and train such an army came from a new treasury that exacted taxes from sources that had never before been taxed and from payments of those not fulfilling their military duty. A new group of troops called the Nizam-i-Cedid were created and trained under Selim III's direction. After a triumphant transformation with these new troops. Selim III went on to create more divisions. Selim III's revisions were successful, his new army holding out against even the rebellious Janissaries.

Selim III's next order of business was to strengthen the government. The new treasury mentioned above was also used to open new schools and send some young Ottomans to Europe for further studies. Additionally, some of this money was used to pay for translations of publications in the west. Before these reforms in education, education was not provided by the state, and the education given was only for Muslims. Institutions for further education in a specific area of study were also being more widely used. For example, schools that let students specifically focus on science or math or technology were built around the empire. Selim III especially promoted these institutions for those would would later fight for the kingdom. The Ministry of Education was created, and a plan for providing primary and secondary education was discussed. Because of a lack of money devoted toward this area, the progress was slow. However, the education system created under Selim III continued and evolved into something even better in later years. Part of the reason for these reforms was the progress and modernness seen among the millet (non Muslim community) areas. Selim III did not want those being educated in millet schools to be more educated than those using the education provided for Muslims.

Selim III wanted to establish positive relationships with other

countries, hoping that doing so would help the empire avoid as many battles. However, because the empire was mostly a Muslim community, making peace with them was harder than first thought as other countries were prejudiced against Muslims. Selim III's literary excellence helped him maintain correspondence with various leaders in different countries, including France. French representatives were sent to the Ottoman Empire, and peace between the two nations was established. Unfortunately, in July of 1798, France landed in Egypt, and Selim was forced to declare war to protect the Ottoman Empire. A few conflicts between the Ottomans and the French peppered the years until 1802 when the countries declared peace.

Because those in the outlying districts of the Ottoman Empire had lost respect for the sultan's word, Selim III had strengthened the army. However, even with a newly strengthened army, the districts, especially the Balkans, did not respect him. Russia and Austria interfered, giving the desired districts autonomy. Additionally, the Janissaries rose up and killed one of Selim III's established governors. All of these events combined to destroy the authority of the Ottoman sultan.

Selim III lost his throne in a revolt. The Janissaries once more rebelled against the Ottoman ruler. Disagreeing with some of the reforms in place, the Janissaries disposed of Selim III and placed Mustafa IV on the throne. The Janissaries, at first created to be an elite fighting group, had long begun supporting leaders they preferred and killing those who did not benefit them. "When Selim III began establishing his own corps of soldiers trained and led by Europeans who would be most loyal to him, the Janissaries saw this as a threat and rose up" ("The Mad Monarchist"). Alemdar Mustafa, an ayan in part of the empire, marched to Istanbul with the purpose of giving Selim III his place once again. Unfortunately, Alemdar was too late. Selim III had already been stabbed to death. Some versions say that the reason

Selim III was killed was that Mustafa IV heard Alemdar was coming to support Selim III. Because Selim III was dead, Alemdar felt his only option was to exact revenge upon Mustafa IV. However, he was not successful in his endeavor even though he made progress toward the city.

Napoleon Bonaparte, who had led the attack against Egypt, had been hoping to take a stab at England, not at the Ottoman Empire. However, as the Ottoman Empire began to struggle, Bonaparte saw how he could use it for his advantage against the rest of Europe. Selim III, who had tried to avoid all war, had wanted to use his time as sultan to reform the military, not fight and exhaust what military strength was left. This desire to ally caused the Ottomans to meet with General Albert Dubayet, from France, and talk about military strategies.

While Selim III experienced some successes during his reign in regard to military improvement, the Janissaries were against all improvement, trying to destruct what little he did manage to accomplish. As such, by the time Selim III died, the Ottoman military defense was really at about the same level as it had been before. Part of this failure is also due to the fact that the Ottoman Empire was drawn into battle even though they were trying to avoid just that. Unfortunately, the Ottoman Empire was already too far down on the path of declining that even Selim III's efforts did not make a lasting difference.

Mustafa IV

Mustafa IV was the child of Abdulhamid I, and he was the leader chosen to replace Selim III from the relatives available. Mustafa IV's reign was short, lasting approximately fourteen months. Because he took the throne from Selim III, Mustafa IV had a target on his back

since the beginning of his reign. As established before, Alemdar wanted to exact revenge for the death of Selim III. He did not plan to let Mustafa IV life for long. Mustafa IV was the next sultan simply because he and his brother were the only two in the family left to rule. As the eldest, Mustafa IV was the one who took the position as sultan.

Mustafa IV, from the beginning, was not interested in school ("Mustafa IV"), and his education suffered as he chased after the worldly pleasures available for him. As soon as Mustafa IV took the throne, the Janissaries created trouble throughout the city of Constantinople, killing anyone who was still loyal to Selim III. As Alemdar began making his way toward the city and Mustafa IV feared for his life, he ordered his own brother and Selim III to be murdered so that Mustafa IV would be the only surviving successor, guaranteeing his safety. Selim III's body was displayed to Mustafa IV, and he assumed that his brother was dead also as he had ordered.

The rebels once again did not like the sultan and demanded that he let someone more able to rule take over. It was at that point that Mustafa IV's brother, Mahmud II, revealed himself. Mahmud II's claim was accepted, and he was given the throne. The only thing Mustafa IV accomplished with his reign was not allowing Selim III's reforms to be completely undone. Mustafa IV was deposed in July of 1808 and killed in November of 1808.

Mahmud II

Mahmud II was born in the year 1785, the posthumous son of Abdulhamid I. Being the last ruler in the family able to take the title of sultan, Mahmud II jumped at the opportunity to take the throne when the empire began rebelling against his brother. Mahmud II's reign is noted for the reforms he instituted including the Decree of

Tanzimat, which will be further discussed in chapter six. Mahmud II sported nicknames such as The Reformer and The Warrior ("Mahmud II" Wikipedia). Mahmud II succeeded in keeping the throne, having ordered the killing of Mustafa IV, the only other male of the Ottoman dynasty" (A'goston, 30).

The grand vizier who had been ruling with Mustafa IV tried to continue the reforms of Selim III. Unfortunately, he was not very successful, and he was killed when Mustafa IV was deposed. Mahmud II was much more successful in his war against the rebels. In regards to territory, Mahmud II experienced a few victories in the beginning of his reign, gaining back Medina and Mecca. The First Saudi State, who had been controlling the two cities up until that point, had been banning the Ottoman Empire Muslims from entering the holy places. The leader of the state had even desecrated some tombs of Islamic believers. Mahmud II had the leaders beheaded for their actions.

A few battles actually caused Greece to break away and be free of Ottoman rule. The Ottoman-Persian War (1821-1823) gave Persia a large victory over the Ottomans, causing the empire to lose some of its power. Later on, some of the European nations- England, France, and Russia- teamed up against the Ottoman Empire. They used their navies to defeat the Ottomans in the Battle of Navarino. The Treaty of Constantinople, signed in 1832, declared that Greece was its own nation, independent from Ottoman rule. Algeria, occupied by the French, defeated the Ottomans in another facet. These defeats combined to foretell the future of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1826, Mahmud II stopped his efforts to revise the Janissary forces; he terminated their corps all together. In its place, Mahmud II filled out the Ottoman protection by reforming the army to appear more like the European style. The army was now mainly comprised of

Turkish speakers. Additionally, Mahmud II sought to rebuild the Ottoman navy after its embarrassing loss of Greece. In 1828, the Ottoman navy contained steam ships. The Imperial Navy Arsenal began building various ships to support the growth of the navy. In 1829, the Ottoman Empire was the proud owner of the largest warship in the world at that time. This ship could hold over a thousand sailors and had over a hundred cannons ("Mahmud II", Wikipedia). Mahmud II was hopeful that with this ship, other countries would respect the Ottomans and their navy once again.

Mahmud II suppressed the power of Dere Beys. They had started out as rulers of small land areas who were supposed to be an extension of the sultan. However, because they had the power to choose their own heir, they had been collecting wealth for themselves and their descendents and had become "petty princes in almost every province of the empire"("Mahmud II" Wikipedia). The reason behind this reform was to rid the empire of the corruption of power it had been experiencing.

Near the end of Mahmud II's reign, he began what was known as the Tanzimat Reforms. "The Tanzimat marked the beginning of modernization in Turkey, and had immediate effects on social and legal aspects of life in the Empire, such as European style clothing, architecture, legislation, institutional organization and land reform." ("Mahmud II" Wikipedia).

Mahmud II's death is somewhat disputed. Some say he was murdered, which would not be unusual considering his position. However, there are also indications that he died of tuberculosis. In 1839, the year of his death, flocks of people came to bid him farewell. Mahmud II would not be forgotten. This was shown when in 2009, *The Janissary Tree* was published. This book was based on the reforms Mahmud II

put into place, even featuring the sultan himself in several chapters. Mahmud II, inheriting an empire without much hope, was able to perform some miracles in regards to building it up. However, were his Tanzimat reforms enough?

Chapter 6: Tanzimat Reforms

The Tanzimat reforms "was a series of governmental reforms between 1839 and 1876 that sought to centralize and rationalize Ottoman rule and capture more tax revenues for the military defense of the empire" (Thompson). Mahmud II instigated the reforms, and the next two rulers - Abdulaziz I and Mehmed Murad V- continued to enforce and develop them. The reason this undertaking began was to battle the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Not only had the empire been shrinking and lost its power in comparison with other European nations, Mahmud II was also hoping to improve the empire internally. The millet system, as discussed earlier, allowed non-Muslims to rule themselves in small communities; however, the reforms wanted everyone to be reporting to the same authority, preventing disagreement in that area. Part of this meant that Christians would be given more rights within the empire so that they would support the sultan. Mahmud II also wanted to avoid interference from European powers, who might try to take even more land from the already shrinking empire if something was not done about the state of its internal affairs.

The Edict of Gulhane was enacted in 1839, not long after Abdulaziz I took power. Mahmud II had been completely involved in the shaping of the edict as it was in the planning phases; however, it did not become reality until after his death. The edict was seeking a positive administration and contained the following clauses ("Tanzimat" Wikipedia):

- Instructions for the security of each citizen's life, honor, and property,
- the introduction of the first paper banknotes used in the

empire,
- the first post offices of the empire,
- instructions for reorganizing of the finance system,;
- updates for the Civil and Criminal Code,
- the establishment of the *Meclis-i Maarif-i Umumiye*,
- the reorganization of the army
- instructions for a regular method of recruiting members for the army and fixing the duration of military service,
- the adoption of an Ottoman national anthem and national flag,
- the first nationwide Ottoman census in 1844, although only men were counted,
- the first national identity cards for all citizens,
- the institution of a Council of Public Instruction and the Ministry of Education,
- the abolition of slavery and slave trade,
- the establishment of more modern schools (as mentioned above in the reforms completed by Selim III, except now the schools were mandatory for all Ottoman children),
- the establishment of the Ministry of Healthcare,

- the formation of the Commerce and Trade Code,
- the establishment of the Academy of Sciences,
- the use of steam ferries for transportation,
- the establishment of the modern Municipality of Istanbul,
- the allowance of adult non-Muslims to become soldiers,
- the establishment of the first telegraph and railway networks,
- the replacement of guilds with factories,
- the establishment of the Ottoman Central Bank and Stock Exchange,
- the Land Code,
- the permission for private sector publishers and printing firms,
- the decriminalization of homosexuality
- the establishment of the School of Economical and Political Sciences
- the Press and Journalism Regulation Code
- the establishment of the Imperial Ottoman Lycée at Galatasaray, another institution of higher learning for civilians
- the so-called "Nationality Law

of 1869" creating a common Ottoman citizenship, excluding discrimination based on culture or religious beliefs.

These reforms offered great promise for the Ottoman Empire to take control and thrive once again. There were a few focuses for the Ottomans. First of all, they were seeking justice and order. The Tanzimat reforms were leaning away from corruption and seeking to provide the safest environment possible for the Ottoman citizens, providing social equality for all citizens, Muslim or not. Secondly, the treaty endeavored to protect the empire in international affairs. One reason for creating this treaty of reforms was to give other countries a reason to let the Ottomans sort out their own problems instead of taking over their empire. Last of all, the reforms worked toward a more stable economy.

"Abdülmecit I guaranteed the rule of law and an end to arbitrary decisions as well as safety of life, property, and honor for all of his subjects, regardless of religious affiliation. He also pledged himself to a just system of tax collection and military conscription," (Aydin). The point of these reforms was to benefit the people as a whole. With the people safe and happy, the empire would be able to thrive with citizens who supported its decisions instead of rebelling constantly.

In the beginning, the Tanzimat reforms were received positively. The European nations looked on them with favor as they seemed to be providing equality for all, not just Muslims. This shift away from strictly favoring Muslims in the Ottoman Empire helped the Europeans think more favorably about the empire. However, as the reforms became reality, the Muslim citizens of the Ottoman Empire complained. "Muslim tax farmers who had been taking advantage of the iltizam system, bankers, and other intermediary groups criticized

the new structure that arose as the tax farms were abolished because this resulted in both direct material losses and in anticipated future losses as their means of acquiring wealth were restricted" (A'goston, 554). Basically, some were taking advantage of the prior system that favored Muslims, by draining money from the non-Muslims. As such, with fairer reforms in place, this group of people was upset and began to spread rumors that the regulations were not put in place by the sultan but something imagined by those being mistreated.

Not only were the Muslims against the reforms, but the Christians were as well. They had enjoyed their relative freedom from before. They did not want to give that up for a questionably better future. While they did enjoy some of the relaxations of taxes that the reforms provided, they did not want to lose the leaders who shared their own beliefs.

One downfall of these reforms is that there was no specific plan for putting them in place. Some of the reforms were easier to perform than others, such as building and starting a school. However, others, especially the clauses that dealt with defeating the corruption in the empire, were harder to measure. How could one know if they had been successfully accomplished?

After some years of trying to enforce the reforms, the Reform Edict was declared in 1856. This edict was more specific in regards to Muslims and their attitude toward non-Muslims. This edict allowed all members of the empire to worship freely as they saw fit. People who were leaders of the different religions - popes, patriarchs, etc- were provided with a fixed income so that they would do their best without feeling the need to accept bribes or act in a way to increase donations. Additionally, the government became responsible for maintaining roads. The measure of security was also changed as officers were

required to guarantee the safety of all members of the empire, playing no favorites. Before, playing favorites to Muslims had been accepted, but with this new set of reforms, acting so was not accepted.

How well did this edict go over? Europe was pleased with the second attempt to reform the empire and provide equality. Those within the empire were once again resistant to change and believed that the edict was done to please Europe more than benefit the empire. The empire began to lose its main language -Turkish- and became a multilingual empire. This change in language use caused the empire to become even more disjointed.

Some of the benefits were geared especially toward the non-Muslims. They benefited in the following ways: being able to read the law in their language even if it was a minority language, the establishment of a court with at least two judges ruling over it, and the right to own property. However, depending on the millet of which they had been a part, they may have lost some measure of religious freedom; this loss of freedom depended on how much freedom their millet had previously allowed them. Secondly, the non-Muslims were now required to do military service the same as Muslims. While this was a disappointing change for them, it was a fair and just requirement.

While the Tanzimat reforms claimed that one could have religious freedom, the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire actually harassed the non-Muslims. It was difficult to pinpoint who was leading this harassment, which also made it difficult to stop. Some non-Muslims found it easier to convert than withstand the torture, while others simply kept their beliefs to themselves.

Now, this being said, one must understand that all change takes time.

Those who were young at the time of the Tanzimat reforms were educated in the new schools. The new schools helped instill in them the belief of tolerance. This was a positive change for the empire, and some of those who attended the schools grew up to become political figures.

Arabs were notably against the Tanzimat changes. Part of this was that they were some of the elite who lost their powers. However, after watching the system in effect for a time, the Arabs realized that by sending their children to certain government schools, their children would graduate into government positions, still giving those Arab nobles a portion of power in the government and what laws were passed. Some of their ideas caused the Tanzimat reforms to be less effective.

In 1876, an Ottoman constitution was also implemented. This constitution gave the Tanzimat reforms a little extra push. This constitution helped develop the First Constitutional Era, which only lasted two years. A parliament was established to provide a voice for the citizens. People were not placed in the parliament position. There was to be an election. Unfortunately, this system did not last for long, and there were only two elections total.

In the end, the Tanzimat reforms actually accomplished what they set out to do. The economy was restructured, and more educational institutes were built. Additionally, trade was opened up with other countries, and the military was restructured. However, the reforms having to do with political power did not go over well and were not very successful. Power was still concentrated in Constantinople. Even with the effort put in behind the Tanzimat reforms to rebuild the greatness of the Ottoman Empire, it was not able to achieve its goal. The reforms were simply too late to save the empire, and by 1876, the

Tanzimat reforms had basically been discarded, even though some of the effects remained.

Chapter 7: Ottoman Collapse

The Ottoman Empire was on the decline, but the sultans in charge still fought to maintain the empire which had once been so successful. However, after it was clear that the Tanzimat reforms could not be successful, the collapse of the empire was inevitable. Three factors, as have been discussed, affected the ability of the empire to do well. First of all, the sultans after Suleyman I were not interested in doing their part to maintain the kingdom, when other more interesting things were available to do. Secondly, the empire was large, and it was difficult for the army to reach the invading problem in time. Last of all, the Janissaries became more destructive rather than beneficial for the empire.

Abdulmecid I

Abdulmecid I was the thirty-first emperor of the Ottoman Empire, and he ruled from 1839 to 1861. Abdulmecid I was the emperor who instigated the Tanzimat reforms, following his father's specific instructions. Nonetheless, reforms in the country's economy were not the only things changing; the turban was outlawed during this time. The fez was seen as the new fashion statement. Additionally, a telegraph was installed in the palace in Istanbul so that Abdulmecid I could more quickly communicate with others around the world. This caused the empire to stay in touch with the world's latest technological developments.

In 1854, the Ottoman Empire had to take a loan during the Crimean War. However, when time came to pay for this loan, the Ottomans did not have the money. They took out further loans, and they fell out of the good graces of the Europeans who did not approve of their money managing. Abdulmecid I restored the Hagia Sophia to its former glory,

and he succeeded in some domestic reforms through the Tanzimat. However, the relationships between the Ottoman Empire and the rest of the world faltered during this time. Abdulmecid I died of tuberculosis in 1861.

Abdulaziz I

The reign of Abdulaziz I was the reign where the Tanzimat reforms were especially enforced. Abdulaziz I was the first sultan of the Ottoman Empire to travel to Europe, visiting several countries on his trip and only increasing his interest in the European education and way of life. He was able to personally visit with the English and the French to re-cultivate the empire's relationships with them. Additionally, those in power in European countries sent visitors to the Ottoman Empire. International relationships were blooming.

In the end, Abdulaziz I was deposed. There was not one act that led to this but the accumulation of various activities. The public debt combined with his expenditures did not sit well with the citizens of the empire, leading them to resent him. He was deposed on May 30th of 1876. Four days later, he was found dead. Some commented that this must have been a result of suicide as he was somewhat mad. However, others believe that he was assassinated ("Abdulaziz of the Ottoman Empire"). Abdulaziz I's rule was marked by his advances of the navy and the construction of railroads. Additionally, the first postage stamps were issued, and the Imperial Museum built in Istanbul was a result of Abdulaziz I's inspiration from seeing the European museums.

Murad V

Murad V only reigned for three short months in 1876. Two stories exist around his deposition. One, told by those who deposed him, is

that he was somewhat mad, and they did not trust him with the empire. The other story says that those who deposed simply did not like the reforms and constitution that he was going to put in place. However it was, after ninety-three days, the title of sultan was taken from Murad V. He was not killed throughout this; he lived until 1904, almost thirty more years before dying a natural death.

Abdulhamid II

Abdulhamid II was the thirty-fourth sultan of the Ottoman Empire, and he was "the last Sultan to exert effective autocratic control over the fracturing state" ("Abdul Hamid II"). Reigning from 1876 to 1909, Abdulhamid II began his reign by instituting the Ottoman constitution that Murad V had been unable to do. Unfortunately, this constitution was not in place for long. In 1878, Abdulhamid II claimed Parliament was disagreeing and the system was not working. Because of this, he suspended the constitution and democratic system and seized absolute power once again, ending the First Constitutional Era (1876-1878).

During his reign, another war with Russia broke out. The Ottomans lost Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria. Additionally, other countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, were given reforms that favored them. This was a humiliating defeat for the Ottomans. The Ottomans began to make an alliance with Germany, visiting the country and helping each other improve in various ways. The Germans were not very friendly with many European nations, so this step to improving international relationships was not viewed well by all in Europe.

The citizens of what was left of the Ottoman Empire rebelled after all this time against being a democracy. After Abdulhamid II lost a few cities to the rebels, he quickly reopened the Parliament and made a speech in December of 1908, hoping to show his intent to be a democracy. However, this attitude was not enough to keep him from

being deposed. The people wanted to assure a democracy, instead of fearing Abdulhamid II would take power into his own hands once again. The people deposed Abdulhamid II and put him in captivity to live out his days until he died in 1918. He was not mistreated or abused while in captivity. Abdulhamid II's reign is most renown for being the last reign with a sultan who used absolute power.

Mehmed V

Sultan number thirty-five, Mehmed V was the son of Abdulmecid I, and he ruled for nine years. He came to be sultan just as the Second Constitutional Era was beginning. Because of this era, being sultan meant that he did not have as much power as the previous sultans had had. The parliament that was elected held a surprising combination of the different cultures and ethnicities within the empire, having "142 Turks, 60 Arabs, 25 Albanians, 23 Greeks, 12 Armenians (including four Dashnaks and two Hunchaks), 5 Jews, 4 Bulgarians, 3 Serbs and 1 Vlach" ("Second Constitutional Era").

The parliament revised the constitution in August of 1909. One of the revisions was that no secret societies were allowed within the empire. In a show of faith, the parliament abided by this rule themselves. The parliament next worked through advancing some reforms to help modernize the empire. Unfortunately, there were many differences of opinion within the parliament, and the men did not seem able to resolve the differences. They changed their leader or staged coups to try to find the root of their problem, blaming one leader and another. While the parliament did make some positive changes, nothing was lasting as the first world war was just around the bend. The Second Constitutional Era that began with Abdulhamid II's rash declaration in December of 1908 was ended in 1920 as the Allied forces took over much of the Ottoman Empire.

The Italo-Turkish War took place from 1911 to 1912, and the Ottoman Empire lost all of its remaining African territory to the Italians. The First Balkan War caused the empire to lose nearly all of its hold in Europe as well; although they did still have one small strip of land there. In November of 1914, with a world war brewing, Mehmed V declared war against the Entente Powers and joined with the Central Powers- Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, and now the Ottoman Empire.

Even with the declaration of a jihad- holy war- on the Entente Powers, the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire did not seem to care ("Mehmed V"). The put no effort into helping the Central Powers. In 1916, the Arabs in the empire revolted and changed sides to actually fight with the Entente Powers. Mehmed V died in the palace in July 1918, a few months before the First World War ended.

Mehmed VI

Mehmed VI was the thirty-sixth and last sultan of the Ottoman Empire. He ruled from his brother's death in 1918 until 1922. The First World War only succeeded in speeding up the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. During the war, Great Britain conquered Damascus, Jerusalem, and Baghdad, causing the empire to lose even more territory.

In 1920, the San Remo conference was held to decide what the terms would be for those who had been on the losing side of the war. The Treaty of Sevres divided the Ottoman Empire among its enemies. All non-Turkish territory that was part of the empire had to be given up immediately. The French received Syria, and the British received Palestine and Mesopotamia. The Ottoman Empire had already negotiated with Russia in a previous treaty in 1918, directly at the end of the world war.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly was formed in 1920 for the new, smaller Ottoman Empire to try once more to fix the underlying problems. Soon after its formation, the assembly deposed Mehmed VI and dissolved the sultan position all together. They also drafted a new constitution, hoping they could survive as a democracy. Mehmed VI was exiled in 1922 and died four years later.

Abdulmecid II

Abdulmecid II was not a sultan of the Ottoman Empire. He was the head of the empire or caliph. All of these titles refer to his role as a decision maker but not a holder of much power. The creation of such a position was the Ottoman Empire's last attempt at becoming a democracy.

Abdulmecid II was the son of Abdulaziz I in 1868. Throughout his young life and even into his adult life, Abdulmecid II (also written Abdul Mejid) was confined to the palace. When his cousin, Mehmed VI came to the throne in 1918, he was called crown prince. Only a few weeks after the position of sultan was abolished, Abdulmecid II, as the crown prince of the empire, was given the role as caliph or head of the Ottoman state.

The Treaty of Lausanne, as described below, was established, and six months later, the position of the Ottoman Caliphate was abolished just as the position of sultan had been. Abdulmecid II was officially out of a place of rulership. Out of a respect, he was given a title as "General of the Ottoman Army," but the title did not accompany any necessary duties. In his later years, he turned to painting and became quite a professional painter. Additionally, in his last years of life, he became an enthusiastic butterfly collector. He lived a long life and died in

1944 in his personal house in Paris ("Abdulmecid II").

End of the Ottoman Empire

In 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne cleared up the empire's borders both for the empire and for the surrounding countries. The boundaries as stated by the treaty included Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Within the treaty was the official statement of the land that had been ceded to different powers in Europe. The territories on the Arabian Peninsula were not specifically mentioned in the treaty. This treaty caused other countries to recognize the reality of the Republic of Turkey, in the place of the Ottoman Empire. The official declaration of the Republic of Turkey took place on October 29, 1923, and Ankara was made the capital of Turkey. The Ottoman Empire was no more after nearly seven hundred years in power.

Conclusion

The Ottoman Empire was a strong world power during its time. However, as the empire began to decline, the leaders decide that what was left of the land should be turned into a democracy, as many other European nations were doing. The hope was that the Republic of Turkey would fare better than the Ottoman Empire had.

In conclusion, here is some poetry written by the Ottoman sultans that gives a representation of the empire's path. The first poem is written by Osman I, the first sultan of the Ottoman Empire. The second poem is written by Suleyman I, one of the Ottoman Empire's greatest sultans. Suleyman I's poem refers to himself in third person, because he wrote under a pseudonym ("The Sultan Poets").

"Osman, son of Ertughrul,

One of the Gagauz Turks

A humble slave of the Lord

Conquer Constantinople, and make it

A rose-garden" Osman I

"O Suleiman; here's your crown:

To be generous and kind hearted

Is the pageantry of the throne.

If you want to see your subjects happy,

Do not be arrogant, think that they may be

Better than yourself.

We are all brothers; we must love each other.

O Suleiman, a true Moslem regards this solemn behest.

Act wisely, but do not remain unknown,

Shelter the good, and be sever to the wrongdoers.

To be a tyrant like a Tartar Khan

Doesn't befit a Sultan.

Staying silent against aggression

Is as good as taking part.

Do not hibernate; be awake on your throne

Our strong hands hold the fate of the World.

We have to fight to earn

The regard and affection of men." Suleyman I

Last of all, here is a poem from Mustafa III, who reigned during the downfall of the empire ("The Sultan of Poets").

"The world is in ruins, don't think it can be put right.

Wretched fortune gave the state to good-for-nothing people.

Now the civil servants are all corrupt and villains

Our only hope remains in God's compassion and mercy."

The change in the empire can be seen in these three poems from three

emperors who ruled during very different times. The poetry of Osman I expresses hope for success and his knowledge that he is but a man who needs help.

The poem of Suleyman I displays greatness. He talks about how the Ottoman Empire has "strong hands" that are controlling the world's fate. He has not only hope but confidence in the empire.

Last of all, Mustafa III's poem displays the hopelessness the sultans and those in the empire were feeling as the empire's downfall became imminent. They felt that only God could save them from the mess that had been created.

The Ottoman Empire had its time of greatness and its time when it was the strongest power in the world. However, that time passed, and the empire lost its strength due to mismanagement and the carelessness of some sultans with an inability to effectively unite the empire. "A house divided against itself cannot stand," Abraham Lincoln said this best. The Ottoman Empire was trying to unite too many nationalities, languages, and cultures who did not want to be united. The Janissaries became more destructive than helpful toward the empire, and they were integral to the empire's downfall. In the end, the Ottoman Empire still holds a great place in the world's history, and it will never be forgotten.

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